DWB

The British Journal of Telefantasy No. 86 FEBRUARY 1991

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THE MACRA TERROR

...Prolific Telefantasy Writer Ian Stuart Black Interviewed

Plus: BLAKE's 7 from the Beginning & Much More...

D W B, PO Box 1015,
BRIGHTON BN2 2YU

WELCOME to the first D W B of the new year. If you are subscribing, this is your first of 1991's 12 issues which I hope you will thoroughly enjoy. If you have any suggestions on how you think D W B could be improved, please drop us a line as we are always interested in your ideas. We've decided to rest the readership survey for this year since 1990's run seems to have met with unanimous approval and so we will be basically adhering to the same format, although stepping up the general telefantasy content just slightly.

Apologies if you were expecting to see the complete set of 'Macra Terror' stills this issue. We have held the episode synopsis over for next issue to avoid Macra overkill!

Finally, don't forget that D W B shuts up shop in February so if writing in for any reason be sure to do so before then. Mail sent in February will take a little longer than usual to be dealt with. GARY

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CHANNEL 4 SPEARHEADS 'AVENGERS' THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

FURTHER to the news which appeared in DWB#84, Channel 4 Television has now confirmed that it holds the rights to screen thirteen selected sixty-minute monochrome episodes from 'The Avengers'.

These will be taken from seasons two and three - the Honor Blackman period of this classic British fantasy /adventure series. It is not yet known which episode titles will be televised nor indeed the prospective transmission dates, as contracts have reportedly only just been agreed and finalised between the parties involved. More news is expected very soon, however, with the episodes expected to be broadcast some time during 1991 - to tie-in with the thirtieth anniversary of the programme's launch in January 1961.

"ALL OF SEASONS 2-3 EXIST"

The Weintraub Entertainment group, who own the sole rights to all existing **Avengers** episodes (bar **The New Avengers**) is currently striking 625-line master tapes from the original negatives for all surviving episodes. These are thought to include the season one story, **The Frighteners**, until recently assumed lost or destroyed and the only surviving example of the original series, which many fans don't associate with 'genuine' **Avengers** since it resembled more a drama series set in the back streets of London. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that this unique episode starring Ian Hendry (see right) will be included in the Channel Four batch.

Furthermore Weintraub have announced that they now hold transmission-quality copies of all 52 episodes of seasons two and three.

MARKET PLACE

*On the video front Weintraub have no plans as yet to release episodes during 1991. Weintraub is understood to be awaiting audience reaction from C4 before considering this format for the vintage series. Channel 5 also has no plans for more **New Avengers** releases at present but, as ever, things can change without notice.

*There is an **Avengers** package containing various Honor Blackman episodes currently running on PBS in the States.

*January is the month mooted as the release for 'John Steed & Emma Peel - **The Avengers**' three-issue comic set from Acme Press which we hope to cover next month.

*Too Many Targets, the all new **Avengers** novel by John Peel and Dave Rogers with help from Terry Nation, is now available in Britain from specialist shops. Published in paperback in America, its import price is £6.50.

*The re-release of Kinky Boots peaked in the UK charts at number 5.

Thirty years is an anniversary worth celebrating and **DWB** will be featuring various articles, and hopefully a major interview, on **The Avengers** during 1991.

Ty Power

BBC CONSIDERS SF CHANNEL ON SUBSCRIPTION

EACH YEAR BBC1 and BBC2 are off the air for something between 3,000 - 3,500 hours but, as from September 1991, these dead hours through the night are to be used to provide a new range of specialist subscription services under the banner of BBC Select.

The idea behind this is that subscribers will video what they want from the programmes being shown for viewing at their leisure at a later date.

A total of fifteen different services are presently under consideration, which fall into four basic categories targetted at specific audiences. These are "Specialist Professional", "Community Services"(nationality groups), "Education/Training" and "Entertainment and Leisure". This last heading will probably include a sports channel, at least one music channel and an entertainments service based on the BBC's archive.

SCIENCE FICTION CHANNEL(S)

This last service may comprise a general mix of programmes, but separate comedy, wild life and **science fiction** channels are also under consideration. Programme titles presently being looked at include **Doctor Who, Blake's 7** and **Quatermass.**

No dish will be needed to receive the new services. The only equipment required will be a decoder to unscramble the programmes. This will employ a "Smart Card" system, similar to that used by SKY Movies, which will enable the viewer to tap into the channels of their choice. The more you pay, the more channels your card will be able to decode.

The BBC believes there to be the potential for about 30 different services, although most will be too specialist to be of any interest to the average viewer. However, archive-based channels would at least give ready access to the largest and most varied TV library in the world, and for BSB subscribers an alternative for their redundant squariels as everyone finally gets the chance to see the programmes they have been lobbying for, though at a price.

The service will feature back catalogue programmes only and it is worth noting that it can only survive if it provides what its **subscribers** want to see!

Anthony Clark

TASHA LIVES?

Yesterday's Enterprise, the highly acclaimed 3rd season episode of **Star Trek: The Next Generation,** may be about to get a sequel. A rumour going the rounds of the American fan network suggests that Tasha Yar and her time travelling Enterprise survived their encounter with the Romulans after all and, by some trick of the writer's pen, she ended up in suspended animation! And yes, you guessed, she is discovered floating in space by Picard and his crew who revive her to return to her old job as chief of security!

The twists and turns involved in all of this would be so tortuous as to be almost incomprehensible. After all, the Tasha who travelled back in time with the Enterprise C in order to maintain historical continuity was herself from an alternative future where she didn't time travel - confused?!

It must be stressed that this is just a rumour, but the American **Star Trek** fan network does have an uncanny knack of getting it right...

WISEGUY CANCELLED

Further to our major introduction to the series last issue, it has just been revealed that CBS has pulled the plug on **Wiseguy** in mid-season. Three further episodes in addition to our episode guide for season three were completed before the axe fell but only the first two will be transmitted, the third of which forms the first part of a never-to-be-completed five-part arc. Although it never attracted huge ratings, this semi-fantasy series was a firm favourite of America's leading TV critics.

***Two other** US series doing none-too-well in the ratings are **Flash,** which has dropped from its two-hour debut at 29th down to 56th place, and **Quantum Leap,** which began its latest season at 70th and has fallen to 76th position.

BACK TO DARK SHADOWS

Horror scream great Barbara Steele has joined **The Invaders'** Roy Thinnes and British star Ben Cross in the revamped Vampire soap **Dark Shadows.** The series is shooting episodes with a view to debuting on NBC as a mid-season replacement for any failed shows.

The original gothic soap ran on ABC in the late '60s and followed the ups and downs of your average American vampire family. Dan Curtis, its creator, has revamped the new series, altering it for a prime-time audience which has necessited stepping up the chill factor.

BRIEFLY...

THE TEEN PEOPLE show transfers to London from Leeds on January 22nd for a one week run. The pastiche draws elements from 'The Tomorrow People' through 'Timeslip' to 'Doctor Who' to produce an original, wickedly observed and wildly funny critique of the last two decades of British history. Starring Michael Sheard, the show is at the Canal Cafe Theatre in London's Little Venice. Call (071) 289 6054 for further details.

ROB GRANT AND DOUG NAYLOR, the writers of 'Red Dwarf', are set to use the profits from their award-winning series to fund a company to train new TV writers. The two men feel that it will be a way of returning the favour to an industry that has been very good to them. AC

THE NFT recently screened four episodes of 'The Prisoner'. On December 2nd they showed 'Once Upon A Time' and 'Fall Out', but the sound quality of the latter was so poor that the management apologized in advance. The print also had a "sponsers message" caption interspersed at various points which some members of the audience found slightly irritating. The following Sunday's showing of 'The Girl Who Was Death' and 'Living in Harmony' passed off unhindered.

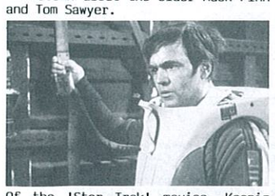
The recent NFT screening of Peter Cushing's '1984', shown as part of the Rudolph Cartier season, was a sell-out success.

DWB hopes to bring you details well in advance of any future genre-related screenings at the NFT. RF

THE RECENT confusion surrounding the 'New Avengers' 'Faces' release has been attributed to an isolated processing problem rather than any deliberate hacking about on Channel 5's part. If you purchased a rogue copy then Channel 5 will be happy to exchange it if you return it to this address: Channel 5 (Customer Returns), 3 Castle Row, Horticultural Place, London W4 4JQ.

WALTER KOENIG is in a dilemma over whether to appear in 'Moontrap II', subtitled 'The Pyramids of Mars'. He starred in the original independent film production several years ago which, due to financial problems, went straight on to video without cinema release. It's success on video has prompted the goahead for a sequel to start filming in February, two months before Koenig is due on the set for Star Trek VI. Sources say he is likely to do both on an incredibly tight schedule.

Koneig, one of the original Trekkers, has also written a SF novel and several TV scripts as well as a story for the DC 'Star Trek' comic in recent years, and during 1990 appeared with Mark (Sarek) Lenard in a play entitled The Boys In Autumn about the older Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer.



Of the 'Star Trek' movies, Koenig cites 'The Wrath of Khan' as his favourite so far, and describes Nicholas Meyer - who worked on 'Khan' and who has been assigned to write and direct 'Star Trek VI' (whom one US wag has suggested be entitled 'The Apology') - as a great writer and a very competent director. In a recent interview he took a shot at William Shatner's writing but defended his direction of 'Star Trek V' stating "he was prepared, he was enthusiastic...he just took the wrong pig to market". Of course, Shatner was also responsible for the pig... KT

BBC VIDEO DATES ANNOUNCED

TENTATIVE DATES have been announced for BBC Video's bumper crop of telefantasy releases for the first half of '91.

The **Blake's 7** releases adopt a once-two-monthly schedule - alternating with the **Doctor Who** releases - and March 4th features **Project Avalon/Breakdown** (BBCV 4468) and **Bounty / Deliverance** (BBCV 4469), with **Orac/Redemption** (BBCV 4497) and **Shadow/Weapon** (BBCV 4498) on May 7th.

The **Adam Adamant** and **Doomwatch** tapes, as exclusively revealed in **DWB,** are scheduled for June 3rd. The former will contain the première episode, **A Vintage Year for Scoundrels,** and season one's penultimate episode **The Village of Evil** (BBCV 4613). The first **Doomwatch** tape will contain the first episode **The Plastic Eaters** by Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis and Terence Dudley's **Tomorrow, the Rat** (BBCV 4477) and the second will feature Pedler and Davis's **The Red Sky** and Terence Dudley's season two opener **You Killed Toby Wren** (BBCV 4478).

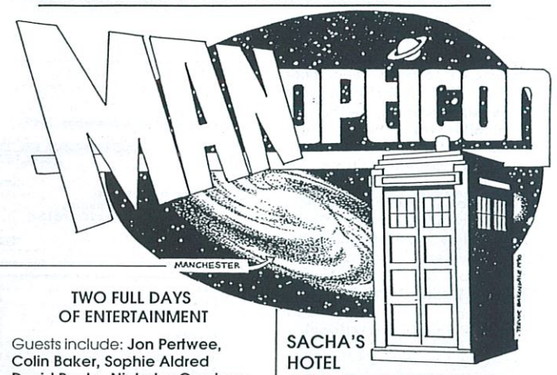
Finally, it has been revealed that all nine fifty-minute episodes of **Star Cops** are to be brought out over three tapes towards the end of the year, each retailing at £9.99. The reason for the series being crammed onto three tapes (running time 150 minutes approx. each tape - the same length as a **Doctor Who** six-parter) is simply because BBC Enterprises don't expect it to sell so well.

1001 NIGHTS

CHANNEL 4's 1001 Nights Of TV on New Year's Day paid homage to the telefantasy genre with clips from **Doctor Who's** first episode, the title sequences from **The Survivors** and **A for Andromeda** (the latter of which was culled from recently-retrieved silent film material), the 1968 ATV Autumn Season trailer which included **The Saint** and **The Champions,** and clips from a black and white puppet documentary featuring a look at the shooting of a **Thunderbirds** episodes.

The programme included many clips of interest to television historians in general.

MSLG PRESENTS THE MAJOR DOCTOR WHO EVENT OF 1991



TWO FULL DAYS OF ENTERTAINMENT

- Guests include: **Jon Pertwee, Colin Baker, Sophie Aldred, David Banks, Nicholas Courtney, Steve Gallagher, Don Henderson, Elizabeth Sladen, Sarah Sutton, Debbie Watling, Stephen Wyatt**
  And for the first time
  Jackie Lane
  Master of Ceremonies:
  John Freeman of Marvel Comics
  (Guests Subject to Work Commitments)
  PLUS
- *Demonstrations and Displays*
- *Charity Auction (Buy a Dalek!)*
- *24 Hour Video Room*
- *Free Glossy Booklet*

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ON
30th & 31st March 1991

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Manopticon Registrations
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Norden, Rochdale,
Lancs, OL12 7RL.
Prices
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Both Days £25
(only £22 for both days if you book in 1990)

All Proceeds in Aid of CHRISTIE HOSPITAL

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SUNDAY ONLY ❒
BOTH DAYS ❒ Please tick one box only
I ENCLOSE A CHEQUE/PO FOR £_____

SEND A FIVER TO THE BEEB!

FOLLOWING THE EFFORTS of those fans around the world who took part in the 'Day of Action' phone-in on November 30th, a new leaflet campaign has emerged which returns to the more conventional form of lobbying via the postal service.

As well as urging a sustained letter-writing campaign, which presumably most fans are already occupied with, comes a novel and shrewd call for fans to "Put your money where your mouth is" by sending the BBC a £5 cheque payable to 'Doctor Who'. As the campaign states, the BBC is unlikely to cash it for this or any other purpose, but it could earn you a prompt response as well as forcing the Corporation into a potentially embarrassing situation!

We have reproduced the leaflet here and call on all our readers to participate in this new campaign.

A THOUSAND CALLS

DWB has obtained "confidential" information which puts the lie to claims issued to the press that only 400 calls were made to the BBC during the fans' 'Day of Action'. According to BBC data the number of calls made to the BBC's Duty Office alone were 996, not taking into account hundreds of calls known to have been made to other BBC departments and offices on November 30th.

Ironically the chart, which records all the telephone calls and letters received from the public for a variety of reasons in the week ending December 2nd (reproduced right), also reveals that forty complaints were received concerning the cancellation of Doogie Howser MD - **Doctor Who**'s 1990 replacement which has been rating less than four million!

"FINAL CONTRACT TO LAPSE"

A source within BBC Enterprises has suggested that, far from wanting to end **Doctor Who**, the BBC are, in fact, waiting until the summer when the final contract connected with the series as a BBC-produced series has lapsed. It is then anticipated that an independent producer/production company will be announced in order for the series to re-enter the recording studios for Season 27. Our sourse insists that BBC Enterprises are well aware of **Doctor Who** as a moneyspinner and are keen to see it back in production since it garners more income than it costs to produce, but they are currently waiting for the "all clear".

However it is not known who holds the alleged final contract which appears to be proving to be the stumbling block preventing the show's return...

MIXED SIGNALS

The BBC seem to be in a state of abject confusion over the future of DOCTOR WHO. We're seeking to persuade them to keep the show.

"Just because he has not been on for a year does not mean we have closed the TARDIS door on the Doctor."

The BBC Press Office, 1st December 1990

"The property is an old one, it's had its day and is no longer commercially viable"

James Arnold Baker, Head of BBC Enterprises, 1st December 1990

Fans of DOCTOR WHO worldwide feel the series does have a future. We're urging every single one of you to write to the BBC now, before it is too late, POLITELY requesting a decision on the series.

We feel a sustained letter writing campaign is by far the most effective campaign to keep DOCTOR WHO in the public eye. A POLITE campaign, outlining the support for and the positive strengths of DOCTOR WHO as a series will provoke the best response from the BBC - an announcement on its future.

POINTS TO MAKE

These are only a few of the points you could raise in a letter. Don't quote them verbatim and be sure to add your own feelings about the series, how long you've watched it etc.

- BBC Enterprises claim 110 million viewers worldwide
- DOCTOR WHO remains one of the BBC's most merchandised shows
- DOCTOR WHO has one of the most flexible programme formats ever for a science fiction series with an incredible potential for further stories and spin-offs
- If cancelled, the income raised from DOCTOR WHO for the BBC in an increasingly competitive market place would be drastically reduced, in terms of continuing US programme sales and licensed product
- DOCTOR WHO is probably one of the BBC's most successful shows ever in reaching a wide range of age groups and as a merchandised 'product'.
- The BBC are faced with several changes in broadcasting in Britain. A successful remounting of DOCTOR WHO, based on the success of other SFtv series could help spearhead their programming for the Nineties.

We know that Marvel Comics' DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE and many fanzines and fan groups in Britain, the United States and Australasia are pushing for some kind of announcement on the show and that a letter writing campaign has the support of a variety of actors and professionals connected with the series.

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS!

Since the BBC seem to be claiming the show is too expensive to make, put your money where your mouth is! We suggest sending a cheque for five pounds with your letter, made payable to DOCTOR WHO. Tell the BBC you're concerned that they can't afford to make the series and you want to help out. It's unlikely they'll be able to use the check but since money seems to talk in today's television industry, it may earn you a faster reply as a possible investor!

NB: DO NOT SEND CASH OR POSTAL ORDERS!

WHO TO WRITE TO

As far as we know at present, only Peter Cregeen, Head of BBC Drama Series and Serials, has the ultimate sanction on the future of DOCTOR WHO. We feel that letters should be targetted on his office but again, they should NOT insult, degrade or offend. This will only alienate Doctor Who fandom from the BBC and it is we as viewers of the series, who most want to keep in touch with the series.

Write to:

Peter Cregeen
Head of Drama Series and Serials
BBC TV Centre
Wood Lane
London W12

MORE 'SAVE THE DOCTOR' INFORMATION

PLEASE enclose a stamped addressed envelope within the country of the club's operation or International Reply Coupons for overseas enquiries:

Friends of Doctor Who PO Box 14111, Reading PA 19612-4111 USA.
Doctor Who Appreciation Society PO Box 64, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 4YH
The Australasian Doctor Who Fan Club PO Box 1-5, Gladesville NSW 211 Australia

All campaign activity is being covered in the following commercial publications, available from comic stores: Doctor Who Magazine, Starburst, TV Zone and DWB.

Above all, don't give up. Star Trek in part returned because of continuing fan letters and support. **PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PHOTOCOPY THIS LEAFLET AND MAIL IT TO FELLOW DOCTOR WHO FANS. THE LEGEND MUST CONTINUE!**

Week ending 2 December 1990 — Confidential

CORRESPONDENCE AND TELEPHONE CALLS RECEIVED CENTRALLY ABOUT PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

	Television	Radio
Number of letters	1506	738
Number of phone calls (in the categories below)	1507	408

	Television		Radio			
	Letters	Calls	Letters	Calls	Weekly Total	Weekly Average
Sex	15	5	0	0	20	38
Violence	1	15	0	0	16	49
Bad language	7	1	1	1	10	73
Religion	2	0	2	0	4	18
Racism	3	30	0	6	39	38
Sexism	1	9	0	5	15	15
Intrusiveness/Rudeness	27	47	0	3	77	80
In poor taste	12	37	10	1	60	90
Bias	26	158	9	23	216	284
Saturation/Repeats	1	117	0	6	124	82
Placing/Scheduling	48	220	5	6	279	521
Poor quality/Boring	3	15	1	6	25	93
Pronunciation/ English usage	2	2	2	4	10	48
Other complaints about programmes	137	694	62	221	1114	1398
Complaints about policy	18	0	7	0	25	123
Appreciations	65	86	27	35	213	498
Factual error/Inaccuracy	7	28	2	32	69	187
Other	1131	43	610	59	1843	3222

TELEVISION

Scheduling alterations provoked most comment this week: the cancellation of Doogie Howser MD, Playdays and Knotts Landing elicited 51, 40 and 22 complaints respectively, whilst 66 viewers complained that the Paradise Club was shown later than scheduled for the second week running. 92 complaints were received about the lack of live coverage of the RAC Lombard Rally, and there were 134 further complaints at the saturation coverage of the Tory leadership election. 23 callers were appalled to see a young girl get into a stranger's car in Byker Grove on Monday, and following Monday's Watchdog 15 viewers pointed out that an open fire with Christmas cards across the mantelpiece was extremely dangerous. A lobby for the return of Dr Who resulted in 996 phone calls on Friday and Saturday (not included in the above figures).

RADIO

Proposed changes to Radio 4's format elicited 82 calls, of which 74 objected specifically to the proposed changes to Woman's Hour.

NB: This is not a scientific sample, but is based on calls and letters received centrally at Television Centre and Broadcasting House.

BBC VIDEO GIVING US WHAT WE WANT!

BBC VIDEO are heeding fans' complaints concerning the release of 'Doctor Who' six-parters over two cassettes and have announced that 'Genesis of the Daleks', out towards the end of 1991, will be issued with the two-parter 'The Sontaran Experiment' at £14.99.

Scheduled as a two-tape pack, **The Sontaran Experiment** will serve as an exciting teaser for the six-part epic to follow, with episodes one and two of **Genesis of the Daleks** coupled with the Sontaran story and episodes three to six available on the second tape.

Out on February 4th are **The Krotons** (BBCV 4452) and **The Curse of Fenric** (BBCV 4453), at £9.99 each, the latter again representing excellent value for money with its restored scenes but at no additional cost to the consumer.

INDIVIDUAL EPISODE TAPES

Doctor Who videos up to June have been announced, but BBC Video stress that the dates given are provisional and could well be put back pending any problems in production.

April 4th sees the release of **The Planet of the Spiders** (BBCV 4491) on two tapes and the classic **City of Death**. The latter replaces **Robot** which has been set back, together with **The Chase** to a later date to make way for two special tapes planned for June 3rd; **The Hartnell Years** (BBCV 4608) and **The Pertwee Years** (BBCV 4609). Each tape will contain four episodes, from incomplete stories for the former and those which exist in a mixed format of black and white and colour episodes for the latter, all linked together with specially-recorded background information on each of the episodes selected. **The Pertwee Years** tape is more or less confirmation that the BBC do not plan to release stories such as **The Daemons** and **The Planet of the Daleks**, which exist in a mixed format only, for the time being at least.

NATHAN-TURNER CONCERN

The BBC have taken the unusual step of contracting former producer John Nathan-Turner to select the episodes, and many fans are voicing some concern that this will not necessarily result in the best selection being made. It is further feared that it will be left to Nathan-Turner to compile the linking sequences as opposed to someone who worked on the series at the appropriate times, such as Barry Letts for the Pertwee tape.

Hartnell and Pertwee were the two eras of the first three Doctors most favoured for this project since they are bigger sellers than the Troughton tapes so far released, but should they prove a success then a selection of Patrick Troughton episodes will be made available; ironically the Doctor with the best credentials for such a format!

D W B's SELECTION

Our Hartnell tape would comprise **The Crusade** 3, **Daleks' Master Plan** 10, **The Celestial Toymaker** 4 and **The Tenth Planet** 2, and for the Pertwee tape would consist of representative episodes from **The Ambassadors of Death, The Daemons, The Sea Devils** and **Planet of the Daleks.** Easy!

DWM RETURNS TO DIAMOND LOGO

THE GUARDIANS OF PROPHECY
EXCLUSIVE LOST STORY ARCHIVE INSIDE

IN A MOVE that issure to please fans, and disappoint John Nathan-Turner, DWM reverts to using the popular diamond logo from its 170th issue.

Editor John Freeman feels that the series' old emblem - which first appeared in **Doctor Who**'s title sequence for Season 11 and lasted through to Season 17 before Nathan-Turner introduced a series of unsuccessful designs - is the most easily identifiable logo the series has had and is still strongly associated with **Doctor Who** via the BBC's video releases.

An increase in production costs has forced the price of DWM up to £1.95, for the first time matching DWB's own cover price. While DWB is produced on an amateur basis, Freeman defends the price of DWM on the grounds that it is editorially biased (sorry, John) based!

BRIEFLY...

DOCTOR WHO was the featured subject of Radio 5's Cult Heroes series on Christmas Eve, recorded in mid-December. See page 10-11 for review.

THE AUSTRALASIAN fan club newsletter Data Extract, edited by Dallas Jones, recently celebrated its tenth anniversary with a cover featuring the reuniting of Jon Pertwee and Katy Manning at the Conquest 90 convention in Brisbane - the first time they had met each other in eight years!

TOM BAKER's next TV appearance is for Thames TV in a four-part satirical drama produced by Euston Films called Selling Hitler, based on the true story of how so many eminent people allowed themselves to be duped following the announcement in 1983 by German magazine Stern that it had discovered no less than 60 diaries of Adolf Hitler. Baker plays Manfred Fischer.

OUR SCHEDULED investigation into Doctor Who phonelines will now appear next issue...

PEARSON "RESIGNS" FROM 'TIMEWYRM', SKILLETER RETURNS!

ARTIST Alister Pearson has pulled out of The New Adventures series of Target books after two aborted attempts at producing an illustration for the first in the set of four, 'Genesys' by John Peel.

"Let me make it quite clear this was not as a result of an argument or a difference of opinion or anything like that," Alister told DWB. "The situation has simply got to the point where I had to be honest with myself and honest with Peter (Darvill-Evans) ...and I honestly believe I am not the right person to be working on this project." This news will have come as a great disappointment to fan artist Andrew Lambert, with whom Alister had intended to collaborate.

In Alister's place steps Andrew Skilleter, returning after a few years absence away from the WHO scene. Skilleter's first WHO book cover was for 'Destiny of the Daleks' back in 1979, and he went on to illustrate nearly fifty covers for the series and countless paintings for his WHO Dares productions, including annual calendars and the acclaimed 'Cybermen' book.

Wasting no time in settling back into his old job, Skilleter delivered his painting for 'Genesys' on December 20th to an impressed Peter Darvill-Evans who told DWB "Andrew has done a great job in less than a week's notice. It's quite unlike a traditional Target cover and more a science fiction book cover which, of course, is what the Timewyrm series is."

Meanwhile Pearson is concentrating on rejacketing existing Target novels, although many fans are not impressed with some of his latest efforts. Darvill-Evans explained to DWB that Alister only has 24 hours in which to do most of the covers since W.H.Allen are very often let down at short notice by BBC Enterprises regarding trannies of the BBC Video artwork and so have to commission alternative new jackets in their place. DWB put it to Peter that, surely, the whole point of rejacketing a book is to improve on the previous cover, when so far this hasn't necessarily been so, to which he replied "What was fashionable on a book cover years ago may not be so now. For example some of the Chris Achilleos covers are now dated. New livery also attracts more appeal within the book trade who are more likely to order far more copies than they would a straightforward reprint."

TROUBLE AT BEEB VID

Unfortunately Alister's problems don't rest with the Timewyrm series...

Here are two views of Alister's cover illustration for 'The Krotons' video release. The original sketch - completed on October 15th 1990 - did not contain the portraits of Jamie or Zoe. These were added to

fill a space in the composition at the BBC's request on the 19th of that month. Alister started work on the unusual Troughton image on October 22nd and completed the whole painting on the 28th. It was then delivered, along with 'The Curse of Fenric' - painted between October 30th and November 10th - on November 14th.

The following day both paintings were returned by the BBC to a somewhat disgruntled Pearson for specific amendments. It was felt that Ace's portrait made her look too old and "...they were sat round the office looking at 'The Krotons' saying to themselves 'Who's that supposed to be..?' in reference to the likeness - or lack of it - of Jamie..."

Alterations were made to both Ace and the 7th Doctor on the 16th, with Jamie being totally repainted from a

different reference photo (the one used on the DWB 25th Anniversary Special wrap-around cover/poster, ref:DWB#61, over the weekend of the 17/18th on a stretched sheet of cartridge paper which was then cut out and stuck down over the original.

Both paintings were then delivered again on November 22nd. On the 26th, Alister received further instructions to alter 'The Krotons' and it was returned the following day. The Home Entertainment staff were still unhappy with 'Fenric' but had decided to go ahead and print it - with deadlines passed - despite the opinion that the Ancient Haemovore looked like "a cuddly toy"! 'The Krotons' was said to "lack atmosphere" and not to be up to the standard of Alister's previous black-and-white covers.

"By this time I was entirely XXXXed off with the whole affair," says Pearson, "though I now view the situation with some amusement... Obviously, all parties concerned want to get the best possible results... It's always been a very collective input thing with everyone having their say, but it's the first time that any of my work has been directly criticised during production, so I find it all a rather novel experience!"

The revamped painting was delivered for a third and final time on December 4th and will be in the shops in February.

"In retrospect, I'm pleased to have been given the opportunity to change both pictures. I don't believe the criticisms regarding 'Fenric' were justified, but certain areas benefitted from the small improvements or clarifications that I made. However, the original portrait of Jamie was very poor indeed. A good rendition of a poor photo. It looked more like the late Richard Beckinsale than a youthful Frazer Hines! I'm reasonably satisfied with both of them now..."

Alister has since completed his run of eight non-video reprint covers for Target and is currently working on further video covers and more book reprints likely to include, ironically, 'Destiny of the Daleks' as well as 'Planet of the Daleks'.

TIMEWYRM TITLES NAMED

THE COMPLETE LINE-UP for the Timewyrm series is as follows:

GENESYS by John Peel,
EXODUS by Terrance Dicks,
APOCALYPSE by Nigel Robinson and
REVELATION by Paul Cornell.

Peter Darvill-Evans explains that the 'Y' in 'Genesys' is a pun and the biblical titles refer to the lifespan of the Timewyrm which is a computer system.

The first book in the series is out in June and thereafter on an alternate monthly schedule.

PLATT WRITES BATTLEFIELD

THE LONG-RUNNING SAGA concerning the delay of the 'Battlefield' novelisation has been remedied by 'Ghost Light' author Marc Platt who has completed the Season 26 story which its original author, Ben Aaronovitch, couldn't get to grips with in between other writing projects. It was Peter Darvill-Evans who suggested to Aaronovitch getting another author, and both agreed on Marc Platt because of the 'Ghost Light' novelisation which was presented, according to a relieved Darvill-Evans, "already painlessly edited." Platt has subsequently completely rewritten Ben Aaronovitch's novel manuscripts, and it is now firmly scheduled for later this year.

HANCOCK SETTING AN "APPALLING PRECEDENT"

Peter Darvill-Evans, W.H.Allen (18-12-90)
DWB#85 contained a couple of letters about 'Doctor Who' books. Here are some comments.

Sean Gibbons asks what is the exact nature of the "contractual difficulties" in the way of novelizing the four remaining Dalek stories. The problem isn't the amount of money, or in other words the percentage of the royalties, that Roger Hancock has asked for on behalf of his client Terry Nation; the problem is that Mr Hancock is not prepared to see such payments as unique to a set of four specific stories. His viewpoint seems to be that no-one can feature any creation of his client without making some financial arrangement for doing so.

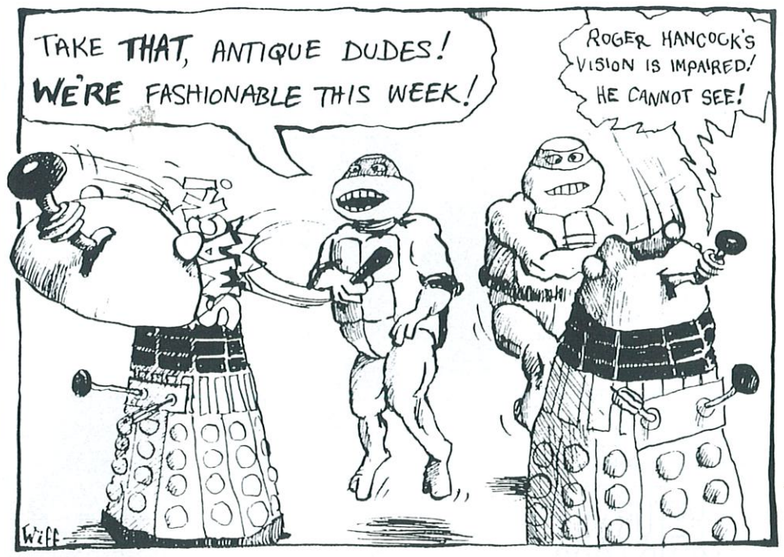
I can understand this viewpoint; the problem is that it contradicts the standard practise for publishing novelizations of **Doctor Who** stories. We divide the total royalties between the story's scriptwriter, the novelizer, and the BBC (not in equal proportions), but we have never paid a royalty to the creator of any of the characters of monsters in the stories - including Terry Nation, and we have novelized plenty of other Dalek stories. We take the view that our licence from the BBC permits us to novelize each script, and that a script is an entity that cannot be divided into component parts.

I am prepared to do a deal with Mr Hancock for the four outstanding Dalek stories - but only as a last resort, a last-gasp attempt to fill the gaps in the Target range. I have asked for, but not received, his unequivocal assurance that such a deal is a one-off, and that it has no bearing on any other book or story. The reason for this is that unless I get such an assurance I would set an appalling precedent; every creator of every character and monster in every novelized TV story could legitimately ask for the same treatment as Terry Nation.

The answer to the entire conundrum lies in the wording of the agreements struck between the BBC and the various creators at the time the original TV stories were commissioned: exactly what rights did the BBC buy? Unfortunately I suspect that until recently, when everyone in the media became more aware of the importance of the sale of sub-rights, such agreements were vague and perhaps not recorded in writing at all.

I move on to Christopher Cox's comments about the Timewyrm series of **Doctor Who** - The New Adventure books. I will try to restrain my anger and continue to write calmly. This is the second letter, highly critical of the Timewyrm novels, that **DWB** has seen fit to print.

Now, I don't object to fair criticism. No one engaged in creative work can expect to please all the people all the time, and editors and authors must learn to live with bad reviews. Constructive criticism is useful: it teaches us to do better next time. But is Mr Cox prescient? Does he have his own TARDIS, in which he has nipped forward to next June to read **Timewyrm: Genesys**? If not, how on earth can he possibly know what he thinks of the book? I'm the editor of this series, and so far even I have read only one of the Timewyrm novels in its entirety. The other three are still being written.



Just in case anyone is still in any doubt, I shall reiterate my policy for **Doctor Who** - The New Adventures. They will be mainstream science fiction novels which feature the leading characters from the TV series. They will inevitably be unlike both the TV stories and the Target novelisations in some respects: the TV stories were limited by technical and budgetary restrictions, and Target books, initially seen as children's reading, have never entirely shaken off the restrictions of that type of publishing. The whole point of The New Adventures is that they should appeal to readers of science fiction, that they should reach a wider audience than just **Doctor Who** fans - because unless there are new TV stories, the number of **Doctor Who** fans will dwindle.

I believe in the flexibility of the premise of **Doctor Who;** the basic idea and the complex mythology that has grown up round it is an ideal foundation on which to build a potentially infinite series of TV stories. It's a shame the BBC don't realise this. But it can also be the foundation for a potentially infinite series of novels - as long as **Doctor Who** fans can restrain themselves from criticising something they haven't seen yet, just because it's new.

EXTENDED FENRIC ADDITIONS

Mark Ayres, Metro Music Int'l (21-12-90)
I was interested to read the article in **DWB#85** concerning the BBC Video release of the extended version of **The Curse of Fenric.** Your reviewer has missed three other sequences which have also been added. All are from episode four:

1) After the death of Nurse Crane a new scene has been added in which Sorin, having given his hammer-and-sickle badge to Ace, is confronted by Jean and Phyllis and has to make 'the singing' to escape (about 46 seconds).

2) Following on immediately from the above, about 8 seconds has been added to the start of the scene in which Ace and Kathleen move the furniture around to block up the windows and doors.

3) About 7 seconds has been added to the start of the scene at the end of the episode where the Doctor and Ace are talking on the rocks at Maiden's Point.

In all, the running time of **The Curse of Fenric** has been increased by approximately 6 and a half minutes.

I was also perplexed by your reviewer's assertion that we do not hear Audrey crying during the scene in episode one in which Ace is in the bunk room playing with the flip flop game. I can only assume that he had somehow got hold of an undubbed copy of the video before my additional music, Dick Mills's additional sound effects and various other sounds (including Audrey's crying) had been added. Perhaps, if this is the case, your reviewer should have pointed this out?

ED: Due to an oversight in paste-up the former 46-second sequence was mistakenly omitted from the article (see page 14 this issue). Thanks for pointing out the other two minor inserts though, and yes, our video copy was an undubbed version.

DAY OF ACTION APATHY

Kenneth Horlock, Kent (12-12-90)
DWB has criticised fan apathy in the past when it comes to taking part in polls, but this is totally different. This was a day in which people were supposed to call the BBC to show that no matter what the BBC may think, people **do** want the show back. All we've succeeded in doing is shooting ourselves in the foot - an own goal to beat all own goals. The BBC view the show as generally unpopular but with a hardcore vocal minority ('Barkers', remember that nick-name?). By not supporting the Day of Action, the fans have proven them **right.** The BBC must be laughing themselves silly. I mean, most people who did call the BBC probably called a few times each, so the alleged total of "400" calls could easily be put down to less than **fifty people**! Where was everybody else?!

I phoned up a few times myself and I assumed things were going quite well as I was put on hold most of the time and another couple of times I couldn't get through at all as the lines were engaged. **DWB** must have upwards of 5000 readers. If all of those had called just once we'd have been fine. The event was also advertised in TV Zone, DWM and the like - even newspapers carried the story. **Everyone** knew, so why didn't everyone phone?

The point was to show the BBC that we wanted **Doctor Who** back. It's backfired to a point where it looks as though we couldn't care less **what** they do with it...and let's face it, we **don't.**

R.D.J.Francis, London SW16 (16-12-90)
Thank you for covering the telephone protest to the BBC. Unfortunately I didn't find out about it until the day after the event. I am a member of the DWAS and feel very let down by our society leaders who apparently felt that telephoning the BBC to complain about the lack of **Doctor Who** would put as in a "bad light" so they chose not to tell us.

Doctor Who needs all the help it can get and the DWAS executives' attitude just isn't helping at all.

Gary Clyde, London NW1 (19-12-90)
Eternal optimist that I am, I was expecting great things from the 'mass' phone-in to the BBC featured in **DWB#84.** Of course I was reckoning without the notorious apathy of some, if not most of fandom in this country.

Now, I admit that I am relying on the figures from The Daily Mail which recorded less than 400 calls logged at the BBC. If true, quite frankly do we **deserve** to get the programme back? It just makes me wonder why I spent a fair bit of time and money making 20 or so of those "400" calls in the first place. After the hype, and the embarrassing response, the BBC can rest easy that there is no chance of the uproar that followed the '85 hiatus.

The BBC had obviously prepared themselves for a substantial response, and those who **did** call were subjected to a patronising taped message about the Doctor being "trapped in a time warp", but at least the BBC switchboard logged my objections.

If **Doctor Who** does come back, I'll be surprised. If not we've only got ourselves to blame.

ED: It has now been established that press reports following the phone-in grossly under-reported the impact of the campaign, as detailed elsewhere this issue, but it is still fair to say that apathy reigns as most fans appear not to have participated.

DISAPPOINTING DWB#85

David Darlington, Strathclyde (21-12-90)
Two months before the **Fenric** video release **DWB** published an article detailing the exact contents of the reinstated scenes and dismisses the release as "disappointing". Thank you **very** much! Some of us were looking forward to the video release, only for you to waste all the surprises.

In answer to some of the points made in the review, we were **told** that the video release would have "about seven minutes" of extra footage. More than this was shot, but as Mark Ayres said at Nebula 90, a lot of this would have been cut from transmission anyway as it didn't work very well (the rock-climbing scene, for example). Personally, I think this story would make a good video release even **without** the extra footage, so the fact that there isn't much of it anyway isn't going to make me feel "cheated" at all.

Since I'm writing anyway, I might as well say that I think the **Moonbase** Photonovel is a waste of space and money. With **The Power of the Daleks,** none of the episodes exist and the story hasn't been novelised, so a photonovel was a good idea. However, half of **Moonbase** exists **and** the story has been novelised, so I don't see the point of it at all. The photographs from episodes one and three (or even all four, if you felt it necessary) could simply have been printed over a few pages with a short synopsis; there was no need to take up half the magazine with a reproduction of the script.

Also, I find the prose style in some of the articles in the magazine rather difficult to follow. For instance, in the **Wiseguy** piece there are several paragraphs I can't make sense of at all. I'm not blaming the writer for this, but the editor. If you receive an article in which the writer hasn't been able to string two sentences together in a way which makes sense, isn't it up to you to clarify any ambiguity?

So I'm afraid I was very disappointed with **DWB#85** and I hope that the next issue will be better.

PS: Does anyone **really** want an extended **Two Doctors** release? Wasn't it long enough in the first place?

LONG-TERM RELEASES

Stephen O'Brien, Bath (10-12-90)
Well, I must admit it took longer than I expected for BBC Video to act on the success of CIC's **Star Trek** releases and >

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bring out **Blake's 7** in its entirety. Not that I'm terribly excited about their choice of series; it's just reassuring to know that the BBC is more open now to a long-term contract of releasing an entire series on video. If the sales are good enough (and there's nothing to suggest they won't be with the nostalgia-hungy SF-starved mases), it paves the way for a whole number of series, not only telefantasy, to be released complete on video. It's a pity more independent video companies don't want to, or aren't allowed, to release some of the sadly-neglected ITV telefantasy series. Video Gems, we know, made a pitiful mess of their **Robin of Sherwood** releases, and of course so did Channel 5 with their **Persuaders** videos.

The success of the **Star Trek** range has shown the economic viability of long-term series releases, which is the kind of proof I'd expect video companies (including the BBC) were waiting for.

Whether some other independent video company picks up the gauntlet and investigates the possibilities of releasing some of those old ITV shows I don't know. I'd hope so, anyway. My choice of release? Oh, **Sapphire & Steel.**

Tim Robinson, Leicester (13-12-90)
Wouldn't it be a kind gesture by the BBC to include the two-part **The Sontaran Experiment** with the **Genesis of the Daleks** video? It would make such a tape reasonably good value with a total of eight episodes and would at least show good will to those stalwart fans who fork out £20 a time for six-parters.

THANK YOU...

Ed Lord, Lancashire (27-11-90)
Thank you for the effort you clearly put into the magazine and, as a long-time reader (since DWB#10), I think the 1990 releases have been the most consistently good you've done in that time.

It's a shame about the fate of **Doctor Who,** but your excellent coverage has been the most useful reference material over the last 12 months. However, I feel that it is the expansion into a more general telefantasy magazine which has made the recent issues so enjoyable. As an **STTNG** fan (more so than a **Who** one these days), I find these articles of particular interest and hope you continue them in the coming year.

Philip Harrison, Cheshire (20-12-90)
Thanks for a **superb** run of issues this year, ranging from the lively letters pages to the excellent interviews, especially Jacqueline Pearce's. I also appreciated your subtle and sensitive handling of the news of Graham Williams' sad death; if you choose a more 'widespread' career in magazine publishing, you can only go from strength to strength.

Robert Hammond, Editor 'Auton' (18-11-90)
Many thanks for including our advert in your September issue. We have had a very good response from it, far better than anything we ever got from DWAS. People are still writing in, months after it was printed!

Kevin Smith, Exeter (12-12-90)
Thank you for your help and support with the Exo-Space convention in November. As you may know we raised £1,000 for our three charities, and the donations will be passed on as soon as possible. I have contacted Mrs Williams and passed on regards and sympathy from Lalla and she is very pleased that we raised some money for her husband's selected charity, the British Hearth Foundation.

The main reason for writing is to thank you for arranging our contact with Lalla Ward; we couldn't have asked for a better and more delightful guest for the event. We have received a very positive response from all our guests and attendees and it seems that even the new season four **STTNG**s were very well received!

CORRECTION

Carolyn McLain, Birmingham (18-11-90)
I'd like to point out an error in the Nebula 90 report (re:DWB#84). Evidently Peter Linford was sitting considerably further away from the stage than we were during the Peter Davison panel. Instead of "The choice between a free trip to Los Angeles and a free trip to Kettering is really no choice at all!", Peter actually said that the choice was between Los Angeles and Redditch (as in Redditch in Worcestershire)! How can I be sure? Simple...I approached Peter during his autograph session and asked him what was wrong with Redditch, i.e. why he had chosen that particular town (which as everyone knows is the metropolis of the Universe...) as the basis for comparison. After pulling a few very interesting faces he admitted that he had mentioned Redditch because that was where he was heading later that day - he was going to a warehouse on an industrial estate to film the All Creatures Great And Small special!

So there you have it - possibly a rather piffling reason for writing, but if you lived as close to Redditch as we do you'd realise the place needs all the publicity it can get. The only thing we're trying to find out is what special effects the BBC uses to make a warehouse look like the whole of the Yorkshire Dales... Whatever it is, it's very effective!

KEEP WHO BRITISH!

Mark Ascher 1, USA (10-12-90)
There seems to be a prevailing wind in the UK that American **Doctor Who** fans want to see an American-produced **Who.** Well, let me assure you that most American fans I talk to want nothing to do with any American tampering of **Doctor Who. Doctor Who** is **Doctor Who** because it is **British.** We like low budgets, the cheap special effects and the fact the everyone in the Universe speaks British English. If we wanted, otherwise we could watch **STTNG.**

In closing I would like to say that if there were still a buck to be made (and **Doctor Who** still makes lots of them for the BBC), we would still be making **Doctor Who** and squeezing every last one out, a lesson the BBC could learn.

Rick Seger, California, USA (23-11-90)
Since Doctor Who will not be seen on our screens again for a very long time, why not also run features on two splendid programmes that have been conspicuous by their absence in **DWB:** namely **The Prisoner** and **Red Dwarf.** I am a recent convert to **The Prisoner** which was obviously produced with great care and dedication and surely is one of the most intriguing shows ever (**Fall Out** is just as bizarre, confusing and enjoyable as **Ghost Light**). And I have seen the first two seasons of **Red Dwarf** on PBS and can't wait to see more.

SEND YOUR VIEWS ON ALL ASPECTS OF TELEFANTASY TO THE D W B EDITORIAL ADDRESS: P.O.Box 1015, Brighton BN2 2YU.

MYTH MAKERS 22

THE SLEEVE DESIGNER of this latest Myth Makers release, resplendent in pink livery, must surely have had tongue firmly in cheek when choosing to splash John Nathan-Turner's quote, "I consider myself to be a hands on producer" across the introduction.

However he clearly cocks up in the subsequent description stating that "John has overseen the most controversial period in the programme's history". Correction: John Nathan-Turner was the most controversial period in the programme's history! This aside I found the packaging to be the most entertaining apsect of the JNT part of this tape. The rest was mostly downhill from the moment I pressed play.

A couple of months ago we had the shock resignation of Margaret Thatcher to adjust to after eleven long years of governing the country, but for many **Doctor Who** fans this was superceded a few months earlier by news of John Nathan-Turner's "redundancy" from the BBC **Doctor Who** Office which he, likewise, had governed for eleven years (fuel there surely for a major analysis on the virtual mirror-images - although on vastly different scales - of these two personalities?). This news was especially surprising since we had been informed annually that "this season will be my last" until it became a standing joke. Apparently it is time to put the record straight courtesy of Nick Briggs and the Myth Makers crew, or is it?

After a fairly interesting and fresh reflection of his career prior to **Doctor Who,** via his work on such series as Z Cars, The Pallisers and The Hole In The Wall, the interview begins a proper using the locations of **The Curse of Fenric** as the backdrop to this 50 minutes of fairly idle chat which is basically the same old 'you've-heard-it-all-before' JNT routine, albeit made more colourful by the subject's mysterious change of (mainly Hawaiin) shirts between each location.

"I'm not into muck raking", declares Briggs, which is a pity because it all makes for rather timmid and predicatable conversation. We get all the same old spiel about JNT's entry into the BBC and his early attempts at being a writer: "I can only write rubbish", he admits, as anyone who possesses a copy of Tardis Inside Out or The Companions (or, God forbid, **both!**) will readily confirm. Much of the discussion focuses on Fenric and its locations while issues such as Eric Saward's departure from the series are dismissed with comments about being "shocked" and "angry" and announcing that he has not forgiven his former script-editor to this day, followed by an embarrassingly awkward pause to boot!

Usually I am a fan of Nicholas Briggs' laid-back approach, but with such a controversial person at his mercy he missed an ideal opportunity to prove himself as an investigative all-rounder. I am not suggesting that Nathan-Turner had insisted on vetting the questions and approving the final edit before clearing it for release, but Nicholas Briggs certainly did him a favour with his selection of questions. Now that he has left the series JNT should have the courage to be more frank and forthcoming, as the reviewer of CyberCon II in last month's **DWB** correctly stated. Nick could particularly have been more challenging in response to some of Nathan-Turner's theories. For example the ex-producer has always maintained that he was "persuaded" or "asked" to stay on the series amid much praise. Shouldn't someone challenge him that perhaps the phrase intended should really be "stay put"? And he still wallows in the fallacy that **Doctor Who** became a ratings pawn in the early '80s to test the midweek ground that EastEnders would lay its foundation in (the two shows obviously being so identical in format you see...). Not to mention the hiatus which is discussed complete with

some of the delusions that I reported on in my PanoptiCon review (**DWB#84**). To round the interview off Nathan-Turner declares that he is not relinquishing all ties with the series, announcing "I'll be back...". A very ominous ending indeed methinks.

To sum up, I would have expected a lot more from this video bearing in mind the epic series of events that constitute John Nathan-Turner's tenure-ship. It is nicely shot and directed of course, but in this case a pretty presentation it does not make.

A quick word, though, for the "trailer" featuring the forgotten Doctor, Barrington Black, as seen at PanoptiCon, who is, we are told, the subject for the next Myth Makers release. It is truly brilliant and worthy of the price of the tape alone (which 50 minutes of JNT's rambles most certainly isn't!).

JNT:3 out of 10, Barington Black:11 out of 10. Buy the tape and you'll see what I mean...

Autographed copies of Myth Makers 22 available from John Fitton at £15 (plus (£2.25 P+P, address on back cover).

Why do the Myth Makers tapes cost more than BBC Videos?

AS LIFE LONG FANS of 'Doctor Who', we have always found DWB to be a very good read, but, oh my, we are getting rather bored with reading letter after letter compaining about the price of six-part 'Doctor Who' stories on BBC Video.

Perhaps there are grounds for complaining about the £20 price tag for a six-part story, but in our personal opinion we consider there to be a much bigger "rip off" (for want of a better word) in the **Doctor Who** video world than the BBC videos, and it is one which would appear to have gone almost unnoticed. We are, of course, talking about the Myth Makers series from Reeltime Video.

For example, take the new Mary Tamm release (as reviewed in **DWB#83**). The hefty price tag for this item is £15. The running time of this tape is said to be a mere 50 minutes!! This being the approximate length of two **Doctor Who** episodes on BBC Video. Work this out and you will see that the following applies:

The Dalek Invasion of Earth video: Running time = 150 minutes, Price = £19.99, Cost per minute = just under 13½ pence.
Mary Tamm Myth Makers video: Running time = 50 minutes, Price = £15.00, Cost per minute = a huge 30 pence.

Work this out and you will find that for the BBC to cost their tapes out at the same cost per minute as Reeltime would result in a hefty charge of **£45** per six-part **Doctor Who** release.

We have always felt that the Myth Makers videos were somewhat overpriced (i.e. £9.99 for 30-50 minutes), but they seem to be getting even more so these days. We've only got a few of the early Myth Makers videos - we gave up buying them ages ago because we felt that they certainly did not offer good value for our money. In our experience their packaging looks very amateurish and their picture quality often looks like a second generation copy at the very best of times. Also, the camera work (for some reason) is not always all that good. For example, just look at the 'long distance' Sarah Sutton job!

We know that it could be said that Reeltime have overheads to meet etc., but there again so do BBC Enterprises. We are not even sure if Reeltime regard themselves as amateurs or professionals, but as **Doctor Who** fans we have to look at all of this in a "value for money" light when spending our hard-earned cash on merchandise.

When it comes to spending £15 on just 50 minutes of a Myth Makers interview which, in our opinion, is of sub-standard quality (in terms of picture and packaging, not necessarily in content), or paying out an extra £5 and getting a really professionally-packaged, top quality (as far as the BBC archives copies will allow) piece of **real** (vintage) **Doctor Who** from BBC Enterprises, with a playing time **three** times as long as the Myth Makers tape, we know for **sure** which we think is by far the best value for money.

The Mary Tamm Myth Makers tape is only half as long as a standard four-episode BBC **Doctor Who** package, yet it **still** costs an extra half as much again.

So, are the BBC videos good, or even fair, value for money? We rest our case.

Eric & Julie Johnson

*We use the Mary Tamm tape only as an example and wish it to be made clear that we have nothing at all against the lovely Miss Tamm herself.

IAN BARNFATHER, MARKETING DIRECTOR AT REELTIME PICTURES, REPLIES:

It is always difficult to defend pricing policy let alone creative and technical quality, however Reeltime's reputation amongst fans is important to us and I shall try to explain for the Johnson's as simply and succinctly as possible the obvious difference between the BBC video releases and our own Myth Makers tapes.

BBC Video are supplied with a complete programme, made on a television budget, for which they do not have to pay - only exploit to its maximum. Their overheads are only packaging and duplication. Clearance and royalty payments are required, but on sales of over 20,000 in the UK alone these can be taken in perspective.

Reeltime produce the Myth Makers series from scratch. We fund the shooting, editing, cyphering, packaging and duplication direct. We also pay (proportionately) a much higher royalty to the artists. Also, because Myth Makers is very much a specialist release and only dedicated fans of the programme will purchase them regardless of the production values, we can expect to sell no more than 700 tapes (at the most) of each title, so the 'profit' we make is pin money by comparison.

Reeltime Pictures is a professional film and video production company mainly working in business television. As a company, we do not consider Myth Makers a viable profit-making venture - we make them because I'm a **Doctor Who** fan and enjoy producing them. We cannot afford to shoot on broadcast 1" tape, hire professional writers and directors, full crews or duplicate using the large facilities houses. Within the strict budget limitations we do the best we can. I doubt that the Johnson's appreciate our own frustration that, after working for a client on a budget of tens of thousands, we have to scrape by on a few hundred. It is only because of the efforts of Nick Briggs, Mark Ayres and others that we get to the level we do.

I agree that many of the series (by our own standards) are poorly made. However, I do feel that Eric and Julie should have watched some of the latest releases before putting pen to paper. Also, we have managed to allow access to artists like **Tom Baker** and **Mary Tamm** who are shy of appearing in public and provided a lasting tribute to some **Doctor Who** celebrities who have, sadly, died since their Myth Makers were released.

Criticise our productions, but (as with **Doctor Who** itself) please do so with informed opinion.

It is both illogical and unfair to compare Myth Makers with **Doctor Who** on BBC Video. In the cold light of dawn it is up to the fans whether they consider Myth Makers worth purchasing. We will continue to produce them if they are wanted - at least we are committed to the programme.

COVERING THE CULT

VIA A LOOK AT THE RECENT UN-HYPED RADIO 5 'DOCTOR WHO' DOCUMENTARY, ANDREW PIXLEY REVIEWS THE TELE-FANTASY YEAR ON THE WIRELESS AND GUIDES AS THROUGH THE VARIOUS DOCUMENTARIES DEVOTED TO THE TIME LORD OVER THE YEARS...

EVEN THE RADIO TIMES it seems is determined to force radio into the status of second-class media. In the days when video and audio entertainment pages were interleaved, it was not unusual to cast a casual eye over the delights of the three/four BBC stations when TV was flagging and flick on the old wireless.

Now, most people have the option to merrily leap from the final entry for BBC2 on Friday through to the cookery pages and Letters to the Editor...straight over a wealth of what can be quite excellent entertainment. And how many people would never consider turning on the radio anyway? It's not surprising to find that the majority of self-confessed hard core **Doctor Who** fans have got all the rare pirate videos over the last 27 years, yet have never actually enjoyed the dubious delights of **Slipback** of only five years vintage.

The length of programme entries doesn't exactly help draw attention to the items on offer either. It was only by chance that I stumbled upon the entry '8.30pm CULT HEROES - Tony Slattery investigates **Dr Who**' (or something like that) on Christmas Eve and so was able to tune into what is probably one of the best documentaries concerning the show I've seen or heard. Also it was on just after the final episode of **Thunderbirds** which in all gave an hour's pleasant entertainment.

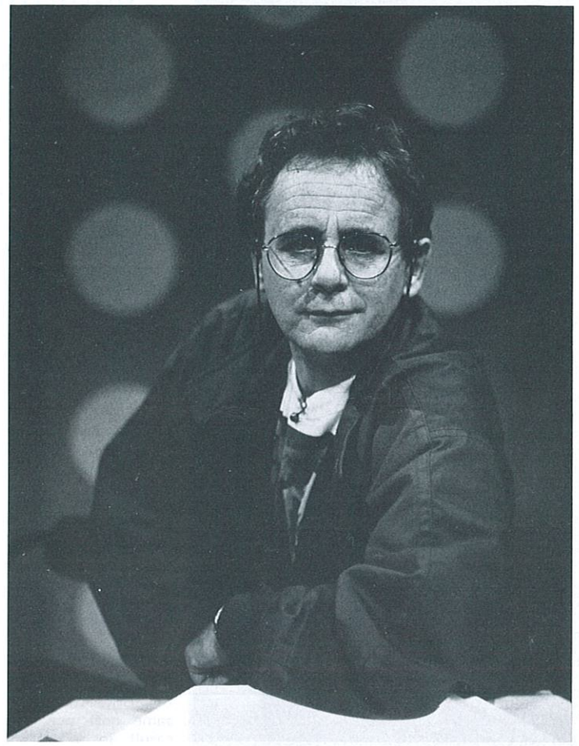
There's a lot of good stuff on the radio as I've mentioned before in **DWB** - not least of all on the BBC's new arrival, Radio 5. Classic comedy is often better supported on the radio than on TV, as sporadic episodes of Hancock's Half Hour, The Burkiss Way..., I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again and The Navy Lark bear out. Also the last two years on Radio 2 have seen some of the very best science-fiction adventures in any media as **Journey Into Space** has again heard Jet Morgan, Mitch, Doc and Lemmy undergoing full-blooded, nerve-gripping exploits from the fifties. The first season, **Operation Luna**, was regrettably the truncated remake whereas the second season, **The Red Planet**, is being transmitted in its original form - albeit with the season split for several months after episode ten before we get the final ten instalments. It is only to be hoped that the concluding season, **The World in Peril**, will also hit the airwaves before long.

Radio 4's comparable entry last year was **Dan Dare**, a four-part and highly stylised adaption of the first story from the famous Eagle comic strip. In glorious stereo it captured wonderfully the fifties feeling of pure adventure and attention to detail which accompanied Jet Morgan over thirty years ago - but in a late night slot nobody was ever going to hear it. Actually scheduled for release on the BBC Radio Collection label, the tapes have mysteriously disappeared from the lists on offer due to lack of response to the radio series...and presumably other outings with Dan, Digby and the Mekon have gone in the same direction.

Although it is clear from a questionnaire in Radio Times that actual radio listings could soon be a thing of the past, I know that I'll always be keeping a firm eye on the airwave schedules since I know **The Red Planet**'s probably more enthralling SF than I've seen on TV during 1990.

Turning now to the aspect of Cult Heroes' documentary about twenty-seven years of a Time Lord, I'll explain the statement made earlier about it being one of the best shows on the subject. Whilst it runs to just under half-an-hour and says very little new, what it **does** say is at least relevant and gives a fairly rounded overview of the show. Casting my mind back to The Lively Arts' presentation of **Whose Doctor Who** that Sunday night in 1977 whilst everyone else was watching Robert Powell, I remember being terribly disappointed by the inclusion of consultant physician Dr. Sherwood-Jones and educational psychologist John Miller. What had these people to do with the show? And no matter how many times I see it, Tony Cash's programme has never convinced me that they **do** have anything to do with it. The vox pops from the kiddies are too frequent - there is little input from the informed viewer, or indeed any reference to the then-growing organised fandom. The programme tries to bring the programme over far too much as a common element of every day life. Whilst the clips were generally well-chosen from the episodes actually available at the time, there is little attempt to examine the show's history or development. The documentary jumps about too much from subject to subject with little conclusion or overview. The behind-the-scenes footage on **The Talons of Weng-Chiang** was a nice technical item, but there was little from Melvyn Bragg and his team to set it in context.

The next programme devoted to the Doctor to spring to mind was Radio 4's entry in its The Enthusiasts series in 1986. Subtitled **The Whovians**, it consisted of sarcastic Alan Smith - who clearly didn't want to be there - wandering around PanoptiCon investigating Dee-WAS and managing to hit upon either fans of precisely the looney nature sought by television and newspaper cameramen the world over, or generally sane individuals whose words were livened up by a spot of editing when found to be too serious. There was little history to the show, but then to be honest it was more of an attempt to examine the fans and their appreciation. This in itself was too diverse a subject to sum up in



twenty minutes. It was easier instead to talk to the American fan known as Zachary - the tenth incarnation of the Doctor. At one point in the embarrassing ordeal for the listener, the snide tones of Alan Smith imply that for any male human being to be a fan of **Doctor Who** he must, ipso facto, be unaware of the delights of female company. The programme is really summed up best when Alan Smith reveals his true colours: "For my money **Doctor Who**'s a load of whimsical clap-trap that should have been dropped down a time vortex years ago...". One can only assume that Mr. Smith wasn't an enthusiast of anything himself. The language of fandom is common across many media and subjects - it is an object of respect for those who are part of it, and an object of derision for those who lurk lonely on the outside.

BSB valiantly attempted two documentaries of sorts under the banner of **31 WHO** and tried another angle. This was one aimed directly to fans, who would presumably be the only people interested enough to be watching BSB that weekend anyway. However, for casual viewers it was probably a real turn off. The production team admittedly went all out to get the guests by the dozen, but once there the two female hosts were so ill-informed on the subject that little of interest was actually said. No overall look at the show's substantial history was in evidence to illustrate its development, and the choice of extracts was poor since it was limited merely to the episodes cleared for that weekend. However, as a documentary it was better than Tony Cash's attempt since it delved into the areas of fandom, merchandise and knowledge of the show's experts. The Mastermind was pretty embarrassing nonetheless, but the real nadir must have been the implication that anyone who impersonated a Dalek in the middle of London when handed a sink-plunger was a die-hard **Doctor Who** fan.

Across the Atlantic there have of course been a trio of documentaries on offer to PBS stations: **Doctor Who Who's Who, Doctor Who - Then and Now** and **The Making of Silver Nemesis**, all of which would deserve far greater coverage than allowed here and were, to all intents and purposes, almost fan productions in approach, save for the final one which dealt well with many aspects of television production.

So, what was so great about **Cult Heroes**? Did anyone say anything new? Not really. With no major revelations, what's the big deal then? Well, it's simply that the programme flowed well and was constructed well. The gaps in material tend to become apparent only later, as opposed to being a clearly thrown-together hotch-potch of interviews and clips. The programme develops as it goes through the show's history, everything is relevant and, occasionally, a conclusion is drawn.

The show opened with general background info to the Time Lord in question and then cut to a selection of vox pops from Tony Cash's **Whose Doctor Who.** Next, John Nathan-Turner explained the flexibility of the premise and the impact of the first regeneration (although his comments about it being the first time another actor took over an established television character are open to debate!). John Collins, the 31-year-old DWAS Co-ordinator, then explains clearly about the society and conventions, not dwelling too long on the extreme elements of fandom, which leads to Nathan-Turner explaining his "three level pitch" for structuring the show .

With the background established, we now start to walk through its history as Verity Lambert talks about the early days and how the historicals were supposed to be "accurate" even if not "educational". Dick Mills then explains the collaboration of the Radiophonic Workshop .

Two extracts from **An Unearthly Child** are now used, both again from the Cash documentary since their timing cuts fall in the same place, and as we hear William Hartnell's voice, Verity explains how she was determined at the outset that the Doctor should be anti-establishment, unpredicatable and dangerous. Moving into the Troughton era is the scene with Mollie serving tea from the 1987 Did You see..? **The Evil of the Daleks** clip with Troughton's character and genius outlined extremely well by John Collins, to be concluded by the confrontation between the Doctor and Slaar from **The Seeds of Death** episode six .

Jon Pertwee is next to speak, describing how his memorable costume came about and also how his dislike of unconvincing technical jargon was responsible for bringing us those thrilling action adventures. Lis Sladen then explains about the protective nature of the third Doctor, leading into the Aggedor sequence from **The Monster of Peladon** part three, also from the Cash programme. The next two items hail from the same source as Tom Baker comments on the programme and its lead character before an extract of him with Harry from **Robot** part one. This comes back to Lis Sladen, now talking about Baker's bohemian manner and love of the rôle and concludes with the start of the mind wrestle from **The Brain of Morbius** part four.

Now comes the weakest point of the show where John Collins deals with Peter Davison's tenure in almost one breath, commenting that he was popular with the ladies. This takes him onto a discussion about Colin Baker, how he seemed unpopular with the BBC and fans alike and the possible reasons for this. The sixth incarnation is demonstrated by two extracts from **The Twin Dilemma** part one as the Doctor sees his new face and arrives on Titan III.

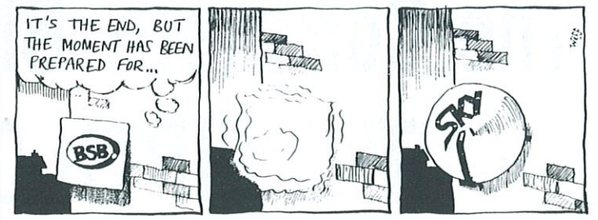
John Collins' honest explanation about Colin's departure takes us into a piece about the most unconvincing regeneration to date, and now Sylvester McCoy himself takes over to discuss his costume and the question mark umbrella .

The next topic of discussion is the Daleks, beginning with a shortened version of the **"Obey us or die!"** extract from **The Daleks** as used in the Cash documentary. John Collins comments on their success, and Sylvester relates similar anecdotes about the making of **Remembrance of the Daleks** as he did on BSB.

Nathan-Turner admits that his era saw leaps in technology and the ability to use new equipment, but maintains that his intention was still to provide strong stories rather than try and emulate the space battles of **Star Wars** - which seems a rather dated comparison to make thirteen years later. Verity Lambert counters these comments on recent years by saying that the series has lost its truth and changed too much whereas **Star Trek**, she feels, has always retained its original "truth".

Through to the closing credits as a Dalek voice grates over the Howell arrangement of the theme, this little item - written by Ed Thomson and produced by Alan Hines - was certainly no worse than any previous attempts to analyse the show. It does draw conclusions, is generally honest and accurate, does not ignore criticism and presents balanced arguments. It does not portray fans in a 'looney light' but on the other hand does not ignore their existence nor importance. The culling of material from The Lively Arts is at first disappointing, but in fact the extracts are probably better used here and the contents flow very well. It is only the knowledge that this is their origin which spoils things, and hopefully **Cult Heroes** acted as a superb hook to earn fandom a few more younger members who are not as jaded as the rest of us, and to whom at the moment **Doctor Who** must be starting to seem like a bit of a distant memory again.

Never overlook the radio! You can never be sure what delights are working there...



SATELLITE TV promised to revolutionise our viewing habits.

Choice was the buzz word; Hollywood block-busters the lure. We were told, time and again, that competition would be good for the consumer and a rosy picture was painted of a multi-channel future catering for our every possible taste.

Less than two years into the viewing revolution and things are starting to look less dramatic than originally predicted with the merging of the two behemoths; SKY and BSB. In reality, however, the up-market BSB has been consumed by its popularist partner. This marriage of convenience has, at a stroke, destroyed the much-vaunted element of competition, and although it still remains to be seen exactly what sort of service "BSkyB" will provide, it is generally accepted that it will look more like SKY than BSB.

Anyone who chose BSB over SKY as their satellite system did so as a positive move in favour of a product that was promoted as the quality alternative. From the point of view of BSkyB, this means it will be able to offer up a wider variety of viewers to advertisers than SKY's predominantly C1s and C2s (the traditional working class). But how many of these people will stay with the new company? If large numbers do not keep up their subscriptions, then although BSkyB will have removed the competition, it will also have taken on BSB's debt without the benefit of its extra viewers.

However, the joker in the pack is the economy. If the recession continues to bite and interest rates stay high, then people's spending preferences will change. Rent, mortgages and Poll Tax are greater priorities than an extended base for home entertainments for most households, and a stagnation in dish sales will have a major impact on the choice advertisers make. Established terrestrial broadcasters will look a far safer bet.

Current estimates suggest that BSkyB only reached about 30% of the households it needed to break even at the time of its launch, and unless dish sales speed up considerably - nearer 180,000 a month than SKY's present 50,000 - then the £550 million project fund will not be enough to cover its needs until it breaks even. With that much interest-bearing debt and an economic recession staring it in the face, the chances of reaching profitabilty by the target date of the end of 1993 must now look very slim.

The dramatic shake-up in the satellite world is also having some far-reaching effects on the independent sector. Apart from over 700 job losses which resulted in the merger, there are also sure to be large scale redundancies in the programme suppliers. John Gau Productions, the makers of BSB's **Doctor Who** Weekend, has reported 30 job losses and similar scale lay-offs are expected from within all areas of the independent sector, which also bodes none too well for the first 1400 of what may be as many as 5000 people recently made redundant by the BBC in a streamlining exercise, many of whom will be turning to the independents for future employment.

The losses are not just confined to jobs. With the demise of BSB goes the D-MAC broadcasting system it used, as BSkyB will only be transmitting from the Astra satellite in the basic PAL format. D-MAC was heralded as the flagship technology on which European high-definition television (HD-TV) was due to be launched. Its set back is in favour of the cheaper and less sophisticated PAL-plus, a wide-screen format based on the present 625-line picture rather than the 1200 lines that HD would provide. In the end, the loss will, again, be at the consumer's expense; the CD equivalent of the TV world has been shot down by a merger which has been made on strictly commercial grounds without regard to the wider ranging implications to the industry as a whole, and not surprisingly approved by the Government operated Mergers and Monopolies Commission who, of course, benefit from the free sycophantic publicity extolled daily by the Murdoch press.

Satellite television is far from dead, but its ultimate form is a long way from being realised. A government that has different views on cross-media ownership from the present one and a slump in consumer spending could shape the final outcome in ways that are, at present, impossible to predict. Like they say in those '50s SF B-movies; keep watching the skies!

Anthony Clark

The Complete 'Blake's 7' on Video

THE BIRTH OF A LEGEND

ALTHOUGH I FIND IT difficult to believe that it really was so long ago, I can still remember the fuss that was caused by the start of the BBC's new science fiction series Blake's 7 in the first week of 1978.

The format was devised by Terry Nation, that self-appointed foreteller of all our futures, be they plague-ridden or Dalek-infested. The Great General Public - not renowned for its length of memory - could only recall, in science fiction terms, back as far as the last season of **Doctor Who,** so it came as something of a surprise when the series opened with an episode which, in its no-punches-pulled approach to a futuristic dictatorship, was more akin to the BBC's series Secret Army centred on the Belgian resistance in the 1940s.

Watching **The Way Back** in 1990, some years after the series - which eventually ran for four seasons - has been and gone, it still has class and not a few of the shocks it had when first transmitted. We are introduced to Roj Blake, a seemingly ordinary man living in one of the domed cities of Earth's future. He is taken out of the city, a criminal offence in itself, where he learns that his memories have been altered by the totalitarian government (an idea recently explored in the successful Total Recall). Slowly Blake learns the truth. The people are subjugated by means of tranquilising drugs in the food and water. He was a notorious resistance leader, captured and forced to renounce his associates - something he can only recall in a series of terrifying flashbacks. Blake is recaptured after witnessing the massacre of a group of rebels, framed and exiled to the penal planet of Cygnus Alpha.

If there is a problem with **The Way Back** it is simply that it is not long enough, even in this unedited format. Obviously the programme-makers were keen to leave the limited Earth location for space adventures, prompted by the then runaway success of Star Wars and the subsequent resurgence of interest in science fiction. We could - should - have seen more of the way of life of the future with more ordinary people existing under oppression, rather than the colourful bunch of outlaws we met on the way to Cygnus Alpha.

Blake's trial alone could easily have justified a second episode. The court, with its stark white walls and bizarre justice computer, is seen too briefly and there is never enough evidence to convincingly condemn Blake. Perhaps he could have been brain-washed into thinking that he actually did commit the crimes? It is an interesting play on our emotions that Blake is framed for child-molesting, that most unspeakable of crimes, and it is probably unlikely that in today's climate such a reference would be used were the series made today. As it stands, it lends another 'adult' element to something that could easily have been dismissed as kid's stuff.

On the acting front, Gareth Thomas as Blake stands out amidst an impressive cast of seasoned character actors. Robert Beatty, Robert James, Margaret John and Jeremy Wilkin all add realism with their performances, but it is ultimately our association with Blake that brings us to face tyranny and domination ourselves. The tyranny and domination in this case is personified in the Federation, whose black-masked, black-suited guards have more than a suggestion of the Daleks about them. A cry of **"Exterminate!"** would not have seemed out of place as the Federation guards gunned down the resistance group, but this remains nevertheless a particularly harrowing scene.

The look of the first episode is expensive, with cinema-standard model work and a number of directional touches from Michael Briant that set the programme far above its contemporaries. Most memorable of these are the cross-fading used for Blake's questioning by Doctor Havant and the bizarre shadows created in the resistance H.Q.

For the second episode on this tape, **Space Fall,** things seem to have gone off course a little. In the hands of a less dynamic director (Pennant Roberts), the series drifts nearer to the feel of sub-standard **Doctor Who** that the first episode tried so strenuously to avoid. As Blake joins forces with other rebels, we lose the personal association with his character that formed the basis of the first episode.

The action of **Space Fall** is confined to the Prison-ship, The London, but, while this could have been claustrophobic and menacing it just looks dull and cheap. Thankfully the model work is still exceptional. We are introduced to Avon, played with a sardonic sneer by Paul Darrow who looks throughout as if he would much rather be doing something else. The character of Vila, seen briefly in the first episode, adds some strained comic relief, and it is only the stoicism of Blake that carries episode two. There are few shocks - with the possible exception of a man who is drowned in shaving foam - and the bite of the first episode is virtually negated.

The episode is only just saved by the arrival of a mysterious alien ship on which Blake is able to escape. The ship (only later given the name "Liberator") is without doubt the most beautifully-designed spaceship ever seen in the entire history of science fiction. It carries all the extravagance of Nemo's Nautilus and its appearance creates an immediate sense of wonder.

The second episode changes the whole direction of the series. Blake is no longer dominated by the Federation, he is fighting back - with a magical ship to travel the Universe in - to defeat the forces of evil. This is not to say that the series immediately takes a turn for the worse because the dramatic potential of the first episode is still there, but it is obvious that the series is not going to follow a predicatable line.

Which begs the question: Where next?

David Miller

If there is one thing that you quickly learn with the new **Blake's 7** releases, it is that you have to take the rough with the smooth. For every great story you have to put up with a couple of poor ones. This is no different, of course, from, for example, **Doctor Who** videos, but the latter does have a (debatably) highly selective video release policy which picks out the better stories for release whilst **Blake's 7** is now, quite rightly, saddled with a pre-determined two-episodes-per-tape format akin to the **Star Trek/Next Generation** releases. For every **Duel** you are lumbered with **Mission to Destiny.**

BBC Enterprises' courageous decision to release the entire **Blake's 7** canon, unedited, is to be wholly applauded. For someone like myself, who was unwilling to accumulate a collection of episodes from third-generation copies and butchered Super-channel repeats, the official unedited releases provide a much-welcome chance to reassess a series which, although always interesting and very entertaining, never quite caught my imagination in the same way that **Doctor Who** has done.

The third episode, **Cygnus Alpha,** continues precisely where **Space Fall** left off. Indeed, we are treated to a series of black and white flashbacks to recap on the previous episode's events. The continuity between the first three episodes is very strong; they form an introductory trilogy detailing Blake's re-found dissidence and the repressive tyranny of the Federation (in **The Way Back**); Blake's fight against his unjust sentence and society (in **Space Fall**); and his quest for freedom and revenge (in **Cygnus Alpha**) using his deus ex machina, the Liberator.

In many ways the Liberator is the star of **Cygnus Alpha.** As David noted earlier, it is certainly the best spaceship design ever to grace a television series or feature film come to that. It is presented using some unorthodox techniques in the early episodes, with many of the shots being created using two-dimensional animation, a method probably not seen since the heady days of Bleep And Booster! The model work, however, is uniformly first class, a credit to the then BBC Special Effects personnel. The ship displays enormous power in this episode and holds the key not only to Blake's escape, but also the means to extract his revenge. When the Liberator's equally suitably named computer, Zen, greets Jenna, Blake and Avon (having read the information from Jenna's mind), it is a wonderful moment. We learn more about the ship; its maximum speed is beyond our own humble design limitations (although this seems to be contradicted later, or perhaps Zen automatically has the "maximum speed" retailored to the new owners?!). The weaponry available to Blake's crew is also impressive - the "single function isomorphic response" blaster (i.e: one gun only per person) was probably a corner that Terry Nation later wished that he'd not painted himself into - and then there is the ship's teleport system, a science fiction mainstay and cliché if ever there was one. Very handy, and a great money-saver!

The other strand to **Cygnus Alpha,** the religious community on the eponymous planet, certainly plays second fiddle to Blake's new toy. Pamela Salem is wasted as the priestess, creating only a little interest in her overt lust for the likeable Gan, Brian Blessed goes right over the proverbial top in a part that has his name stamped all over it, David Ryall as Selman looks quite different to the loveable old bugger seen in the last series of Shelley, but the late Peter Childs looks and sounds exactly like the policeman he played in Minder. The night filming - proper stuff, this, none of your cheap-filter-over-the-camera malarkey - is very atmospheric. Being shot on film helps, too. Sadly poor direction, and atrocious editing, hinder all the action sequences - a problem made even worse by a very annoying mixture of film and video-tape footage.

Cygnus Alpha ends withs a slightly contrived cliffhanger, which leads us into **Time Squad.** Largely set aboard the Liberator, which seems to have been completely mapped out by the new crew now, the episode is a good example of creator and author Terry Nation's style of writing and thinking - it's pretty mundane. The episode is, however, enlivened by some nice character development (Gan's sub story), and does mark Blake's first swipe at the Federation; the raid on Saurian Major. Interesting use of location (both the Federation base - looking suspiciously like the oil refinery location used in **Quatermass 2** - and the surface, dotted with weird and carnivorous flora and graced with a very unusual sound effect) brings a touch of reality to a series which needed grounding occasionally.

It is on Saurian Major that we meet the last of the original "7", Cally. Beginning as one of the series' most interesting characters, her rôle was quickly relegated by her creator to little more than set dressing, ala Jenna. The dull sub-plot aboard Liberator, involving the thawing-out of the inhabitants of a rescued space pod who turn out to be - surprise, surprise - Very Dangerous Indeed, is lit too brightly and plotted in too conventional a way (even by Nation's own undemanding standards) to be suspenseful and makes **Time Squad** a distinctly below-average episode.

Episode five, The Web, is a vast improvement. From the first intriguing shots of the surface of the unnamed planet, strewn with cobweb-like strands and Portmierion escapee bubbles, the story, which is beautifully paced, is a pleasure to watch.

Early on, two of the crew are possessed, although in the first instance we are not too sure if it is 'normal' behaviour. Possession is a well-worn theme, but it's a potent one, and used sparingly as it is here, it creates a very dramatic situation.

The series' first obviously alien creatures, the Decimas, are full of personality. Well designed and used effectively, they are probably the series' most memorable species. The gleeful way in which they wreck their creators' laboratory provides one of the best scenes in the first eight episodes.

The Web is one of Nation's best scripts for the series. However formula Nation's writing becomes, you have to give him credit for being an accomplished master of that formula. Here he creates a clever situation which plays off the freedom of the Liberator; the rapidly closing Federation ships and the proposed genocide of the Decima race. Another essay in the ethics of genocide from the man who brought us **Gensis of the Daleks** before killing off almost an entire species in his previous series, **The Survivors.**

The less said about the silly little man in the tank, the better...

Seek-Locate-Destroy is very much the shape of the series to come, introducing both Supreme Commander Servalan (Jacqueline Pearce looking better than she did in The Reptile and Plague Of The Zombies over a dozen years earlier) and the definitive - sorry, Brian - Space Commander Travis. Some time is used, constructively, building up a reputation for the "butcher" Travis, a vital focus for Blake's rebellion and a villain for the audience to hiss at! If Blake is a symbol of good then it is surely Travis - the worst traits of the Federation personified - that represents all that is evil. The script elaborates on the past encounters between Blake and Travis, sharpening the personal nature of the struggles ahead. Blake certainly has regained his memory!

It is an important episode in other ways, too. It introduces the Mutoids, genetically altered vampire-like warriors (whom we shall learn much more about in **Duel**). The story also develops one of Nation's favourite themes; interrogation. Cally's stoic determination under Federation interrogation reminds me of the Doctor's interrogation in **Day of the Daleks** (not written by Nation, ironically enough!) and the one by Davros in **Genesis of the Daleks.** Having Peter Miles (who portrayed Nyder, Davros's left-hand man in the latter) virtually repeat that rôle in this episode, to Servalan, only reinforces the impact!

The kindest thing that one can say about **Mission to Destiny** is that it's worth watching...once. A whodunnit reminiscent of **Doctor Who's The Robots of Death,** only set aboard a spaceship, the Ortega.

Something that **Blake's 7** generally had problems with (certainly in **Space Fall** and here), was that some of the spaceship interiors looked too solid; not enough like the corridors of the Liberator and too much like the corridors of the BBC, or at least BBC corridor sets! Another - far worse - problem evident in this episode in particular is, again, the awkward mix of film and video footage, sometimes within the same story location, sometimes the same room, with two completely different atmospheres due to the unique feel of each of the two formats.

There are some plus points: the cast, including John Leeson, Carl Forgoine, Barry Jackson, Nigel Humphreys and Stuart Fell could practically make up the guest list at a **Doctor Who** convention; the dialogue is occasionally quite snappy and - hey, credit where it's due - the plot is not too predictable. Unfortunately, if you have seen it once, like most whodunnits it is not really worth seeing again.

The final episode on the BBC's first batch of tapes is **Duel,** which is often compared to the very similar **Star Trek** episode **Arena.** They do exhibit some striking similarities, but **Duel** is nevertheless a highly entertaining yarn, pitting Blake against Travis in the most even-handed way possible, man against man.

Ably directed by seasoned maestro Douglas Camfield (his one and, sadly, only outing on **Blake's 7**), you should not, therefore, be altogether surprised to see Isla Blair - wife of Camfield's old chum, Julian Glover - popping up as one of a planet's two surviving custodians, Sinofar. However she is woefully underused here in a very small rôle and is dressed in a costume which is practically indecent! There are some wonderfully Shakesperian touches early in the episode (a hag straight out of Macbeth and a storm worthy of The Tempest), and some nice effects, probably the best that the series had seen to date. Particularly effective is the technique that turns Sinofar's skin blue early in the episode and the force-wall effect that Blake encounters before being attacked by Travis for the first time. Technically, **Duel** is the series' most accomplished episode of the eight now on sale, and also presents the series' most accessible front.

Not the most ambitious story, but an excellent way to round off the first batch of tapes. Personally, I can't wait for the next release...

Julian Knott

Released January 8th at £9.99 per tape. Catalogue numbers: The Way Back/Space Fall (BBCV 4447), Cygnus Alpha/Time Squad (BBCV 4448), The Web/Seek-Locate-Destroy (BBCV 4449), Mission to Destiny/Duel (BBCV 4450).

NEW FROM TITAN

THE FIRST 'STAR TREK' NOVEL of 1991, **Demons** by J M Dillard, was published by Titan Books on 17th January. This will be followed by novel number 44, **Ghost-Walker** by Barbara Hambly, on 14th February. Both retail at £2.99.

Over in STTNG land, **Fortune's Light** by Michael Jan Friedman, is out on 31st January, again at £2.99. The price for both series, however, goes up from March to £3.50.

Titan have announced further titles of new releases to those we listed in DWB#84. On the **Star Trek** front, novel number 51, **Battlestations** by Diane Carey, is published in September, with number 52, **Legacy** by Michael Jan Friedman out a month later.

The STTNG range continues its infrequent schedule next July with **Boogeymen** by Mel Gilden, which is number 17 in the series. This is followed in October by a Q story by Peter David titled **Q In Law** (number 18) and **Perchance ro Dream** by Howard Weinstein in December (number 19).

Looking way ahead to February 1992, novel 20 is scheduled as **Spartacus** by Terry Mancour.

No new Giant Novels are scheduled at present, and the only large format book so far announced for 1991 - **The Making of Star Trek** by Stephen Whitfield and Gene Roddenberry - is due for release in March priced £6.99.

TITAN BOOKS 1991 THE FIRST DECADE 1991

FENRIC EXTENDED RELEASE ADDITION

ALTHOUGH INCLUDED by Ty Power in his original article and timing of the additional scenes in February's extended 'The Curse of Fenric' release, we omitted to include this lengthy restored scene which is addition number 3 in part four:

3. 47 seconds: Sorin enters a room and is looking around when Jean and Phyllis move out from behind the open door. He feels for his emblem but has recently given it to Ace. It is pointed out to Sorin that he no longer has it. Sorin states that he still has his faith. He closes his eyes in concentration and the girls hold their heads in pain.

This is a new scene. In the context of the story it follows the scene in which Fenric, still in Judson's body, orders the Haemovores to kill Nurse Crane.

NEW THEMES AND NEW FRONTIERS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION **entered a holiday hiatus at the end of November after the broadcast of nine new episodes having passed at least one milestone already.**

With the airing of **Legacy**, the fourth story of this, its fourth season, **The Next Generation** surpassed the original **Trek** series in the number of episodes produced with 80. There will be over 20 more this season and plans are already underway for a fifth series, although time will have to be made to allow the **Star Trek VI** film crews to use some of the sets in the Spring.

Having established its own characters and history with such a substantial block of stories, the new season has been full of references to earlier **Next Generation** adventures and the kind of continuity touches that excite fans. It seems most unlikely now that there would be any real desire on the part of the new series to incorporate any more characters or reminders from the original cast; if that does happen - as has been rumoured - it will be to promote the final film to feature the original cast in what will be their twenty-fifth anniversary year. **The Next Generation** cast now seems comfortably set to pick up their own film series in a few more years. In the meantime, there are plenty of puzzles to be explored in the new series.

The greatest of these is the status of the Borg. After generating enormous publicity by leaving the Enterprise outgunned by the seemingly invincible Borg at the end of last season, the series seemed set to launch a new series permeated by the ever-present threat of Borg conquest. This has not been the character of the new season thus far at all. Indeed, save for the opening episode, most of the stories used thus far could have been written for any season and contain no reference to the Borg peril at all, despite the fact that a substantial part of Starfleet was destroyed by the Borg in one engagement under the leadership of Locutus/Picard. At the least, one might think that this would be an invitation for adventurism on the part of older enemies like the Romulans, but they have been heard from only indirectly so far and from an unexpected source. The Borg will not appear again through the first half of the season and another major new adversary for the Federation is about to be introduced - along with possible negotiations with the Romulans. Interestingly enough there may **not** be a Q story this season at all. One has not yet been written and it will take something special to attract the attention of the producers.

Instead of a Borg season, the overwhelming emphasis thus far has been on the exploration of family ties, although Picard acts as a bridge between the two subjects. He more than anyone else suffers a personal crisis directly as a result of his subjection to the Borg and unexpectedly chooses to revisit his family home - introducing an antagonistic brother and a whole family background never previously mentioned. On the surface it appears that there is little comfort to be had from contact with his brother, but appearances are deceiving in more ways than one. The Borg have not been mentioned again after this episode but it is the intention at least to suggest ways in which Picard has changed in other episodes. In **Suddenly Human** he is thrust into the position of being surrogate father to a most troubled teenage boy who has been raised by a non-human race. Picard moves beyond his legendary antipathy to children and displays an empathy for the dilemma of being caught between two different cultures that may be presumed to flow from his own insight into this torment.

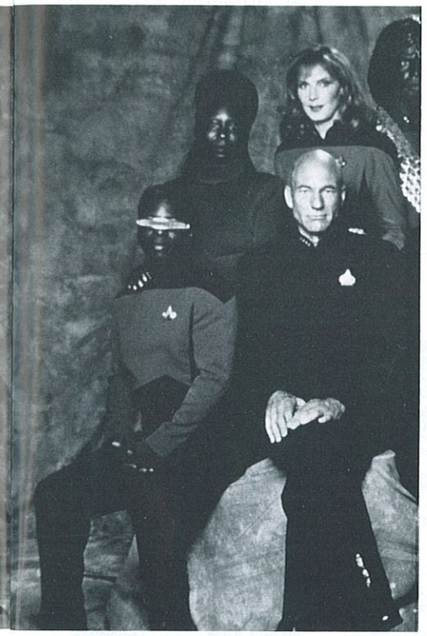
The Captain is vulnerable in more ways than one this season. Just as the last series broke the convention that the Captain was not to be placed into danger in order to allow Stewart the more active rôle he wanted, this series is moving beyond danger to mayhem. The Captain so far has been "Borged', stabbed, crushed by a rockslide, and placed uncomfortably close to an exploding (literally) Klingon.

Data has also met his family, being unexpectedly (and unhappily) reunited with

his brother Lore and his creator Dr. Soong. Before this family affair is over Data learns that it is possible that he can gain the emotions that Soong always intended for him to have except for the bitter intervention of Soong's other "son". All three parts were played by Brent Spiner in a story sure to reopen debate on the subject of Data and emotion. Some fans were unhappy with what was done with this topic in the third series and tended to blame script editor Melinda Snodgrass for supposedly not being sympathetic to storylines incorporating the android - she felt care had to be taken not to over-exploit either Data or the holodeck.

Dr. Crusher has also been featured in a story, **Remember Me**, which explores the strength of her relationship to the Enterprise family as people seem to be disappearing all over the ship...and nobody else even remembers that they ever existed. Finally only she and Jean-Luc remain, which is revealing in and of itself, and the audience is teased with a repeat of the same language used last year in **High Ground** as the doctor starts to tell the Captain how she feels about their relationship but is not able to finish because Jean-Luc disappears too. The Traveller, a character from the first series who took a special interest in Wesley, appears once again to solve the mystery.

Picard is not the only one to suffer personal loss this season. Worf continues to be enmeshed in the tragic consequences of the corruption that seems to run deep within the Klingon empire. His adoptive parents are seen for the first time as they visit him out of their concern over the events that occurred in **Sins of the Father**, when Worf accepted the false accusation that his father had betrayed the Empire to the Romulans in order to prevent civil war among the high council and preserve his brother's family to fight another day. His



parents are a most unexpected but loving couple portrayed as hearty Russian ethnics. Worf later has need of them as the head of the high council summons Picard to choose his successor, he himself having been most dishonourably poisoned by someone in the top ranks of the Empire. This reunites Worf with his former lover, K'Ehleyr, and he discovers that she has a son. He is, of course, the father, but he refuses to acknowledge this because his dishonour before the council would fall upon the boy as well. When the evil that is within the Empire strikes at his family, Worf takes revenge against orders and suffers the consequences in a very strong episode directed by Jonathan Frakes. Script editor Ron Moore wrote a very melancholy story knowing full well it might be shocking to some fans.

Riker is also exposed to a family of sorts when he seems to be captured by Romulans and/or exposed to a virus that leaves him reviving on a much changed Enterprise some 16 years after his last memory. This is a controversial episode for the deceptions within a deception plot it uses but, like **Yesterday's Enterprise**, it allows the designers to explore an alternative Enterprise with altered sets and uniforms. Riker too must cope with fatherhood as he finds he has a son, Jean-Luc, and a deceased wife who was not Counselor Troi.

Another reminder of past tragedy occurs when the ship travels to Tasha Yar's home planet in search of shipwrecked crewmen and the crew meet a woman who claims to be Tasha's sister. Data in particular is drawn to the woman, who represents one of the warring factions in the planet's civil war.

The only major cast change to occur this season did not take place until the ninth episode, when Wil Wheaton left the series to pursue a film career. Since Wesley Crusher is written out by use of the device of finally having him gain entrance to the academy, it is always possible he can make a future return appearance. In the meantime the result will be an expanded rôle for Colm Meaney as Chief O'Brien rather than the addition of anyone new to the cast. In his **Final Mission** Wesley and Captain Picard face death together and reveal the depth of their father/son relationship.

So, although the Borg threat has not figured prominantly it has nevertheless been a rather sombre season thus far. The dramatic mood has been augmented by the skills of a new director of photography, Marvin Rush, who has introduced moody shadows and dramatic highlights to the previously brightly-lit sets. The music has also become more varied. The almost wholesale turnover in the writing staff has not fully proven its merit yet. Although the season got off to a rather tentatively start with relatively weak scripts, the season opener and **Brothers, Family** and **Reunion** were excellently written efforts. Ronald Moore has become the expert at characterisation proving, as last year, to be particularly attuned to Picard. The cycle of character studies should be nearly complete by the end of the first half of the season. It is known that Troi will face the crisis of the loss of her empathic powers in a future episode, leaving only Geordi out of the circle of stories focusing on each crew member. He was originally to be married this season but that now seems to have been alloted to O'Brien. So, as usual, Geordi remains the least-explored character unless, perhaps, LeVar Burton can come up with a way to have Geordi become related to Q?

The Borg are still expected to return in the second half of the season, and that should be a particularly traumatic experience for Picard, just as the return of Shelby - now in charge of rebuilding the fleet - could be a tad stressful for Riker.

Kathleen Toth

NEXT ISSUE: **STTNG** Season 4 Episode Guide pt 1

STEPHEN GALLAGHER IS ABOUT TO UNLEASH TERROR ON A TV SCREEN NEAR YOU, AS MARK JAMES DISCOVERS...

Stephen Gallagher (writer of the **Doctor Who** tales **Warriors' Gate** and **Terminus**) is as surprised as anyone else that one of his earliest attempts at novel writing should have such a long life. To be seen next summer as an ITV mini-series, **Chimera** was originally written by Gallagher in 1979, although it didn't see publication until 1982.

The book explored the territory of genetic engineering and its consequences, themes he was to develop further in his later, more accomplished novel, Oktober. The story was then reworked by Gallagher into a BBC radio play in the mid-'80s and now it's forming the basis for a four-hour mini-series.

Gallagher is glad of the opportunity to work again on material he originally created when just a newcomer to the business of writing fiction: "For me it's amazingly fresh, so I must've done something right the first time out as the story has been so durable. In the book some of the naivety as a novice novelist showed through in that a few of the characters were a little bit empty. Now I've taken those same people and I've got a handle on them and drawn them a little better," admits Gallagher. "In fact, the entire first hour of this is stuff you don't encounter in the book at all. The book actually starts the morning after there's been a big explosion at the clinic, then goes into flashbacks investigating what actually happened in the smoking ruins. In the TV version, we're a lot more upfront about it and you get to see what actually happened."

The series is about an artificially-created creature called Chad; half man, half ape, who (needless to say, and according to genre convention) goes on the rampage, killing his creator in the process. The thing which will make the **Chimera** TV series stand out are the people involved. The production is by Zenith, one of the leading independent production houses. The series stars David Calder, from the BBC's **Star Cops**, as Dr Senner, Kenneth (Hellbound) Cranham and John (Cal) Lynch. The producer is Nick Gillott and the director is the man responsible for the atmospheric Harry's Game, Lawrence Gordon Clark. The movements of ape-creature Chad have been choreographed by Peter Elliot who has worked on the similar-themed **First Born**, Greystoke and Gorillas In The Mist.

The undoubted star of the series, though, is bound to be Chad, a complex mix of animatronic creations and the standard man-in-ape-suit. He's been created by Little John, rising star of the Image Animation effects studio, the people who created the creatures for Nightbreed and the killer robot for Hardware. Dougie Mann is the unfortunate in the ape suit who had to submit to an entire plaster body cast to create a tight-fitting suit. State-of-the-art electronics and modelling techniques have been used to make the face of Chad as convincing as possible. With creatures on the loose, violence and mayhem, doesn't Gallagher fear that **Chimera** may be too much for TV audiences to stomach? "We took note of the IBA guidelines on violence, but in a way they don't impinge on what we are doing, because what we are looking at are the consequences of violence. Certainly I felt no constraints in what I feel to be right with the story."

STAR TREK NEARS COMPLETION IN CIC VIDEO BLITZ

FEBRUARY 4th sees the release of the penultimate pair of 'Star Trek' tapes, covering episodes seventy through to seventy-four.

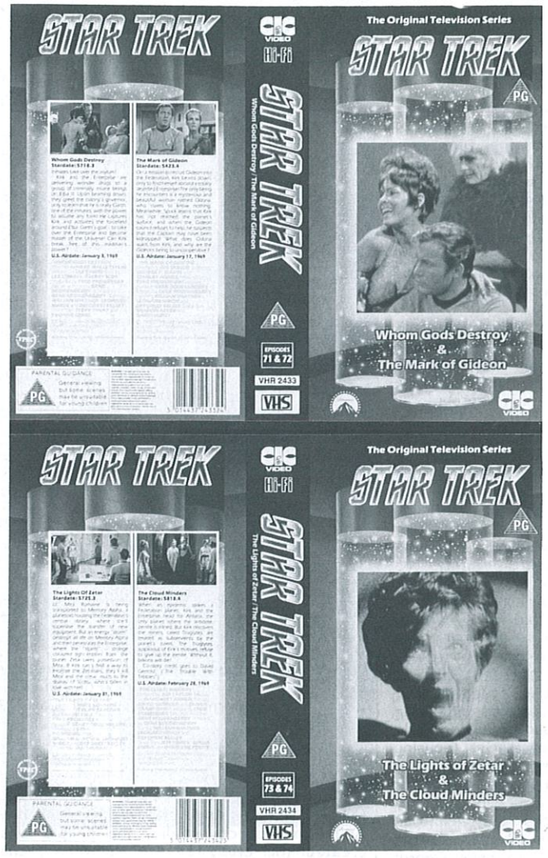
Whom God Destroys kicks off the first tape, another of the infamous BBC-banned episodes (see right) dealing with the sensitive subject of the criminally insane. Backing this is The Mark of Gideon, one of the cheapest-looking Treks and pretty dull with it.

The second tape comprises two of the poorest episodes of the entire run, The Lights of Zetar and The Cloud Minders.

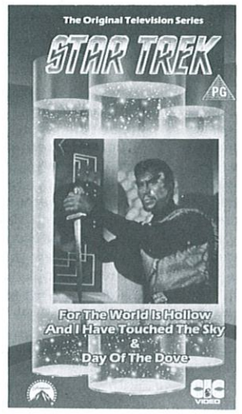
February's The Next Generation release (volume 9) will contain the average quality episodes The Bough Breaks, a Wesley story featuring lots of kids, and a Data romp entitled Home Soil.

All tapes covered on this page retail at £9.99.

Ashley Fisher

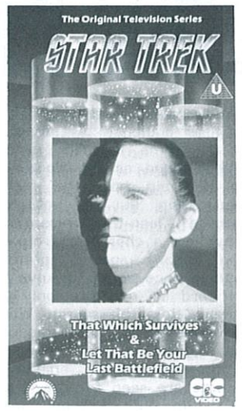


A bumper crop of Star Trek videos got the year off to a good start when CIC released episodes 65-70 and two further episodes of The Next Generation on January 7th.



The first tape contains For The World Is Hollow And I Have Touched The Sky and Day of the Dove. The former is best remembered (apart from its epic title) as the episode where McCoy, discovering that he's caught a terminal disease, falls in love, whilst the latter is very familar territory containing echoes of the earlier Trek story Arena (and Blake's 7's Duel). The last of the original series' Klingon episodes, it also features the programme's only female of the species!

A good example of Star Trek's willingness to break new ground can be found at the start of the next tape (67 & 68) with Plato's Stepchildren, one of the episodes which the BBC has refused to screen featuring, horror of horrors, the first inter-racial kiss shown on US network television between Kirk and Uhura. Wink Of An Eye is a pretty undistinguished entry in the series' history but it still interesting and makes constuctive use of Kirk's overactive libido!



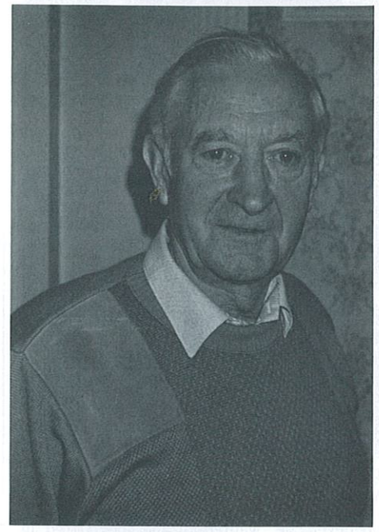
The last of January's Star Trek releases comprises That Which Survives (very run-of-the-mill, but with some good special effects) and Let That Be Your Last Battlefield, probably the best of this batch and the episode which provided one of the series' most potent and enduring symbols; the half-black/half-white men, Bele and Lokai (who might just sound a bit familiar to anyone well-versed in the Norse myths!).

The series is almost complete and the final tape (77, 78 & 79) will be released on one tape with a probable price tag of £14.99. No prizes to CIC for generosity, though surely anyone who has bought the entire series - and hey, folks, don't they look terrific together?! - deserves a bit of a bonus?

January's The Next Generation tape features two fine episodes. The first, and best, is the episode with the most innovative title, 11001001, which features a striking race of computer engineers, the Bynars. Too Short A Season is another Trek essay into the effects of ageing, but it is the reverse of the earlier series' classic The Deadly Years, as it depicts a character who gets younger by the minute!

IAN STUART BLACK

DWB SPEAKS TO THIS ASTOUNDINGLY PROLIFIC TELEFANTASY WRITER ABOUT HIS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL CAREER...



DWB: How did your interest in writing begin?

IAN STUART BLACK: When I was seven I used to write little stories and sell them for a ha'penny which combined my two interests - writing and selling. If you could write you ought to sell it!

Writers often say that there's a passion within them which dictates that they shall become writers...

I think that mine was more overwhelming than a passion, I just never thought of anything else! I used to tell stories to my brothers and cousins - it was just natural. I had opportunities to be other things later on, like to become a producer and a few chances to be a director, and I never wanted to because I thought it would be a waste of time. It's bad enough being a script editor because that takes up time you couid've spent writing your own stuff! It was as simple as that, just no choice.

Did your interest stem from having grown up with books or cinema?

Cinema, yes. My father was what was called in those days an actor/manager. He had his own theatre company in the United States before the First World War which my mother was in. It was a traditional thing. My elder brother was born over there and was around for a bit in the dressing room as a baby but I was born in this country after my father came back and fought in the First World War. He went back into the theatre afterwards but decided it had all changed so he came back, but while we were brought up all the time it was Shakespeare or drama and so on that was talked at the table. Looking at it, psychologically, I decided I wasn't going to be an actor, I was going to write the words for the actors (i.e. my mother and father). It's very Freudian that, isn't it!

What particular books and films did you enjoy then?

In the thirties I used to go once a week to the cinema and I loved all films; westerns, thrillers, the lot. The entire range from light comedy through thrillers, the Hitchcocks (Blackmail I remember seeing), the Marx Brothers, the Broadway stories, the Bing Crosby stories, everything. Films were magic.

People who have reviewed your work tend to say you have a lot of the Hitchcock script-writer in you, in everything from 'Dangerman' right through 'Doctor Who' and up to 'Star Maidens'...

Don't blame me for Star Maidens! I did my utmost to rescue that, for non-professional reasons (for family reasons), and because I'm very fond of Eric Paice. They'd got themselves into a terrible jam - they'd started off with a premise that just didn't work. You see, Eric had worked for me before and this was his idea and I said 'Okay, I'll do it for the money', but Star Maidens didn't give me any pleasure - it was too nebulous and unthought out. They called for me because Eric was under strain. He'd worked on a series in Australia while I was setting up Elephant Boy there so we'd known each other for years. I was the honourary secretary of the Screen-writers' Guild (before the Writers' Guild) and Eric was a member. He and Mac Hulke, his partner, came along to see me once when we were doing the Dangerman series and I met them and liked them. I thought that they had promise but couldn't get them past the producer of the time. They were just starting roughly the same time as Dennis Spooner and Richard Harris. Writers in those days seemed to go around in pairs so that they could comfort one another when they were getting no work!

When did you start writing for television?

On my demob leave I joined the Rank Organisation. My wife had shown them a play while I was still in Egypt and they said 'Get you husband to get in touch with us when he gets back' which I did. I was very lucky. I worked for three years in the scenario department there writing things, which of ocurse they never did because they used to go out and buy books by famous writers or do Dickens or something, but I learnt a lot. I was just starting to make a name in the industry as competent when television comes along and I thought 'Oh God, here we go again!' But as it tunred out television was absolutely ideal for me because in those days programmes were made in half-hour segments. The first thing I did was a series called Inspector Fabian Of Scotland Yard. A group had bought the rights to this book of Fabian's (he was a real man, in fact I was told later on that he was looking on me as the man who ruined his life because of all the things I made up - I didn't stick to the book at all!). I did about eight or nine of these half-hours which I was very lucky to do.

Was it difficult to adapt to television initially?

To begin with yes, because you can't just follow your inspiration when you're doing the professional, formal, rigorous shape of television. You've got to learn how to concentrate what you want to say (your story), make it lively, make it different and stick to the formula.

Dennis Spooner described writing with the leter 'W' which he claimed was the great secret of writing for television where you'd have high dramatic bits and then the dialogue-y bits and then the next action bit and so on.

I never used any formula like that. I just used to learn the pattern and then try and shape it to whatever it was that I wanted to say. And try to enjoy it of course, because if you don't enjoy it, no-one else will.

Was it a conscious decision to specialise on series rather than one-off plays?

Yes, because if you do a series you used to do eight or nine episodes of them. Do a one-off, yes, that's very prestigious, but when you're bringing up a family it's better to do the eight than the one. When I was doing one series they used to be preparing the next, particularly when it

was Lew Grade's outfit, because you'd be finishing series, rewriting scripts or getting writers to rewrite scripts, things like that, and you'd be preparing the next series. So from about '58 to '64 it was absolutely concentrated, and at times you felt like a sponge being wrung dry and then they'd ask more of you. Ugh!

So how long did it used to take you to do a half-hour of 'The Invisible Man' or something like that?

Oh, a couple of weeks. I joined the series in the summer of 1958. I actually went along to the studio at Elstree to do an episode for a series called William Tell which was being made at the same studios and when I got there, instead of doing William Tell, the same company who were doing **The Invisible Man** were in a flat spin - this was a Tuesday and they had nothing to go on for the following Monday. They had been having production troubles because they had an English producer and an American producer who were quarrelling like hell trying to get power over one another and they were having difficulties with their American partners. So they said to me 'Could you forget William Tell and do a script on **The Invisble Man** because it's got to go to casting, it's got to go to the directors, it's got to be typed, re-typed, edited, sets built...' and they took me to a little back room in the old National studios with no window, just a sky light, and I had to write this script in three or four days. It was coming up to Christmas and in those next five weeks I wrote four scripts, the producer himself wrote one and we got a break at Christmas, but when you had to I would do one a week as opposed to one a fortnight which was more normal and which I was much happier with!

The second series of 'The Invisible Man' saw the phasing out of his sister and niece (played by Debrorah Watling) and moved on to more espionage type of adventure. Was this a conscious move?

It was more my kind of story and I was then writing most of them at that point. They were the sort of adventure stories in which you could use the Invisible Man's ridiculous ability to go totally transparent whenever he wanted to and they fitted in very well. I found with the series that I simply wanted more excitement out of it and that meant using the Invisible Man more as an invisible man. It wasn't necessarily to get rid of the other characters, it was just that they didn't fit in with the stories quite so well.

Some of your storylines for 'The Invisible Man', appeared to have been revised for the first season of 'Danger Man'. Were there any reasons for this?

After I left **Danger Man** the company probably went back and thought 'What ideas can we revamp' and went back to their old series to have a look at them, but this wasn't consciously done while I was there.

How did you used to time your scripts?

I would act the scenes quietly to myself and visualise the drama. You got a feeling of when you're up to the quarter of an hour and there's a minute's break for commercials. It became almost a second nature.

On 'The Invisible Man' didn't you end up with the title of 'Story Associate'?

That was the first time I was ever a story editor, which really meant I had to write as much as I could as well as managing other people. In fact I worked out on my contract a weekly payment plus extra for my scripts, so they didn't get the scripts in the weekly payment but at the same time I couldn't possible (nor did I want to) write them all. That would have been ludicrous. I knew my work would suffer under this pressure so I got people in like Ken Taylor, who I'd worked with previously and like as a writer, but Ken had a mind really above that level of material. He was very conscious of pacifism and social issues and I appreciate that, so instead he recommended me to someone who was working for the Danzigers' company - Brian Clemens. So I got hold of Brian and he became my assistant more or less; he'd be in the next room and he'd come through and tell me a story. We used to have all these wonderful discussions and work through scripts together.

What was your brief on undertaking writing for 'The Invisible Man'?

Lew (Grade) never said anything to me, but apparently the producer had intended it to be a comedy series. Now, I felt the potential for excitement was too good. I remember writing a story about a Polish sailor who jumped boat in London and of course the Communists were after him and the Invisible Man was helping him (in fact a Russian paper called Crocodile, which is their Punch, commented on this episode which I felt was putting our little series at a very high level!) - something as simple as that! I like tension, even in comedy I'll try to bring tension in, and Lew had wanted it to be light frothy comedy. As I said previously after I'd joined **The Invisible Man** it became more and more at my level of what I wanted to do in popular television entertainment, and this is what led to **Danger Man** as a premise, which was mine.

'Danger Man' must have been a very difficult concept to sell - 'We're not going to say anything about this character,

except he's there'...

Well, I didn't actually tell them that. What I did was write about four pilot scripts. I remember Pat McGoohan being absolutely furious about one of them, absolutely furious, because I had him lying on a bed with a girl. They were simply lying on a bed in order to open a safe which was behind the bed, nothing more, but Pat was white-faced with anger at a meal we all had together because of this apparently dishonest sexual implication because he was very puritanical.

Didn't he refuse to have anything to do with sex in either 'Danger Man' or 'The Prisoner'?

Yes, but that was very good because that fitted in with the character. Everything was supressed in a sense. Pat was an explosive time-bomb, you were always waiting for him to go off, and that fitted in extremely well with the concept.

Did you design these pilots with McGoohan specifically in mind?

Oh yes! I went to see Pat in Bram by Ibsen at the Hammersmith Theatre and his performance was excellent. Of course it's a classical and religious play, but the **power** of the man came through, and after that I thought that this concept of being a single driving power, not talking to people but all contained within himself, would be ideal for him.

So it was written totally with McGoohan in mind?

Yes, oh yes.

At the time was there any concept of what nationality he was going to be? In the early ones it seemed to be slightly more of the New England accent.

Well, that's Pat's strange accent; it's really Northern Ireland. In fact it's not even Northern Ireland, it's something of his own - sorts of catches in the back of your throat. He still does it - I noticed him on Columbo recently and he's got the same quality in his voice. Good actor, typical actor!

What was your working relationship with him like?

Very good. I liked Pat and got on with him very well. He was a very good actor and I admired him professionally. He had certain things he didn't want to do and I respected that. He wanted very much for the **Danger Man** character to be something he could believe in. He didn't want to be an assassin at any point. He didn't want to kill people unnecessarily and of course this made a complication to the story, and wherever you've got complications and you have to surmount them you come out with a better story. So I went along with that very happily.

Was it your decision not to be involved with 'The Prisoner' or were you simply never asked?

The Prisoner was totally different. It was an idea of Pat's that he'd had for a long time and which he'd discussed, I think, with some friends of his and I'd left by that time. I know that Pat used to chat at the bar occasionally about "an idea" and it must have been **The Prisoner,** but I'd gone off and was doing something quite different.

By this time, of course, most of your work was on commercial television. How did the BBC start creeping in to your career?

Well, don't forget Fabian Of Scotland Yard had been bought by the BBC after these Americans made it. It was the first filmed television series of so-called "adult" material that was shown on the BBC so they knew me and I knew them. We were on sort of friendly terms, although I was very happy to work for commercial television because I liked the sort of drive and the professional qualities. There was an element in the BBC, I felt, of forgiving your fellows if you're all from the same school whereas I always felt it's the final product that's important. Americans used to keep coming across in those days and they knew about me and they'd contact me and say 'Look, can you do an episode of this...'. One was a sort of ghostly story and I did a half-hour for them and the BBC saw it, liked it, and said 'Would you do a thriller-type serial?' Alan Bromley was a good producer who I thought I'd like to work with, so I wrote this original six-part serial called Ransom For A Pretty Girl, and when I was at the BBC writing it, on the door running through to the next office was written **'Doctor Who'**. I asked Alan if they really were the **Doctor Who** people and he said yes and I said 'I'd like to meet them'.

You were obviously aware of 'Doctor Who' at that time.

Oh yes, for the simple reason that my children used to watch it all the time! And people from across the road - whose parents wouldn't let them them see it - used to come into our house and watch it. So I said 'I'd like to do a **Doctor Who'**, and they couldn't believe it. They said 'Why?' and I said 'My kids don't think I'm a writer because I've never done **Doctor Who!**', so they asked me for an idea and I told them the idea of **The Savages** - or The White Savages as it was in those days.

Don't you cite 'The Savages' as your favourite of your three 'Who stories?

Yes, partly I think because I like the idea of this wonderful civilisation with some of the most artistic and valuable things of mankind and, at the same time, in the shadows, it was based on the dark side of man's personality which they were exploiting and it took the morality and advice-type of approach of the Doctor to say that, in spite of all the good it's based on, it had something so evil that he was going to destroy it. It had, in a sort of superficial way, a philosophic idea, and I liked a story that's not just blood and guts and chasing about but something where you're working out something. That's the reason why I probably liked it most of all, although I realise that as a **Doctor Who** it lacked a great monster or a lot of the things that the series had, but at the same time I thought that it was something quite worthwhile trying.

Didn't you find 'Doctor Who' a different

kind of discipline: instead of the taut half-hours or fifty minutes you were used to, here you were looking at constructing a story in four parts that in total would be ninety minutes long?

That was no problem because when you do a film - and I'd done films before - they're ninety minutes or one hundred minutes. And I'd written a couple of books (thrillers) of 80,000 words in length. You can easily slip from comedy to tragedy to love story etc.; you adjust something in your solar plexus and you adjust in your mind for tempo and time. That is second nature and experience.

But at the same time 'Doctor Who' had been going for some time. Is it difficult to take up the reins of what someone else has created and pick up on characters and their mannerisms?

No, no because I'd been watching Bill Hartnell with my kids. I respected Bill Hartnell, who I thought was a very good actor, so it was no problem at all just to slip in.

Did you ever get to meet him?

A couple of times. I liked him, but again he could be very irritable. Don't forget, **Doctor Who** picked up a lot of young and inexperienced actors and actresses and they could be a bit unprofessional, and Bill Hartnell was very professional and could get mildly irritated if they didn't know their lines properly. I could understand that, but he was a charming bloke as far as I was concerned.

He was nearing the end of his time on the series when you first worked on the show and there was some concern about his health at this time.

Well, he wasn't all that old you know, only late 50s, but I thought he was older. I didn't know he was ill though. When they spoke to me about the stories I just assumed that that was the way he was acting.

Were you aware of any question mark hanging over the series' future because of his ill health?

No, that's not the sort of thing the BBC would discuss with the writer, probably in case the writer said 'Right, I don't want to do it and be responsible for this bloke getting any worse'.

Did you go to the office with your own ideas or did they ask you to write around their own framework?

No, I only do my own, but what I had to do with **The War Machines** was to incorporate the Post Office Tower which had just been finished building because they thought that would be topical and interesting to the world. So I thought I could stick that in, and then they said 'Can it be about computers?' but that was no problem. It's like someone coming up to you and saying 'Can you do a story about a cowboy who's lame in his left foot?'. Of course you can.

'The War Machines' set a precedent as the first truly contemporary setting for a 'Doctor Who' adventure.

I hadn't realised that, but when I saw some of the adventures later on I realised that they must have used this in a sense. If you want to break new ground and it works then use it, if it doesn't then discard it, and presumably they thought it worked and decided to try it again, but I hadn't really given it all that much conscious thought at the time as regards the locale - I was just telling a story.

Did the War Machines themselves live up to your expectations?

Yes, I think they did quite well because they made things on a shoestring I found out later and yet they made a lot of these creatures and various other things they built work.

It's sad that apart from 'The War >

Machines' - which was only discovered completely intact a few years ago - all of your 'Doctor Who' episodes were junked by the BBC.

Without being too critical it struck me as crazy that if you've got people who are supposed to be up to their job and they are junking things or cutting them out simply for the sake of getting a tape again... The War Machines sells all over the place and I occasionally take cash in from the United States and that's what, 26 years later, and the BBC could be making sales from all that stuff, not just mine which they destroyed. Instead of wiping these tapes, if the BBC had sold them instead it would have been a bit more cash in their pockets but they didn't foresee the video market which is a pity. If I remember there was a hell of a job getting hold of The War Machines from one of the African countries.

Some writers comment that the difficulty with 'Doctor Who' is that you have to involve companions and treat them as realistic characters, which can be difficult when you're up against the dominating presence of the actor playing the Doctor.

I didn't notice that at all. When I started writing for the series they told me that they wanted two new characters, and as they were going to be picked up in the London of the 60s I knew what they'd have to be like. As far as I was concerned they (Ben and Polly) did not interfere on the stories at all.

Were Gerry Davis and Innes Lloyd a good team to work with?

Oh yes.

You worked with them on 'The Macra Terror' didn't you?

Yes. I wanted to tell a story at a certain level so it was an adventure story and exciting, along the lines of the Doctor using his wisdom and capacity and unworldliness while at the same time having another quality below it - like this wonderful culture based on great evil, the exploitation of man where they withdraw the life essence. I decided I wasn't going to tell a superficial, fast-moving, car chase type story, I would get bored. So there's a hidden something for me and very often that comes through without people putting their finger on it. They say 'That was very interesting' but they don't quite know why it was, but it's because of this second layer of significance.

'The Macra Terror' was one of the all-time horror stories. Were you specifically asked to do a script that edged into the blood-chilling end of the horror market?

Yes, I remember that it was chilling, but I simply dreamt that up on a similar sort of principle, namely telling a story at two different levels. They told me about Troughton and his character (he'd only just started); this light quality, this skittishness, this sort of 'pixie' quality, and so I thought I would play this against the very opposite - something so frightening, so appalling, like death, because these creatures lived on

death. So really you were taking two total contrasts - Patrick Troughton playing his pipe and being an idiot and going into danger.

The director, John Davies, cleverly added to the suspense by keeping the Macra mainly in the shadows.

I think that the art of suggestion is a very good technique altogether. The moment that you come out completely in the open, the moment you state something, is not so nearly as frightening as a curtain moving slightly or something happening in the shadows. You don't show it, you let the audience create it in their own minds - their own second fear. If you come out in the open and are very blatant about something that's fine, and from then on the danger is clear in the audience's mind, but by doing it more slowly and suggestively, almost by implication, that's probably the best and more alarming way I feel and a very fundamental approach to fear.

Had you visualised the Macra in your mind because in your original scripts you specified them as "insect men"?

The original title was 'Doctor Who and the Insect Men' and then they changed into crabs and it became The Macra Terror. I don't quite know why. I think probably the BBC might have said 'Could you think of an alternative to insects?' As to their visualisation I believe in leaving it to the specialists and the Special Effects Department came up with the design for the creatures.

Were you ever present at the filming of your stories?

If I was working on something else or seeing someone at the BBC at the time then I might have dropped in, but I would never interfere with directors because I believed that if you had a director who knew his job then you leave it to him. They didn't interfere with me with the scripts and I knew that they didn't mess about with my scripts much, if at all. I mean, in somebody like Chris (Barry) I had total confidence and he was very efficient in putting it on the screen as it was written.

Were you aware and concerned with all the dissent raised about 'The Macra Terror', particularly on David Coleman's programme Talkback where concerned mothers had claimed it had terrified their children into virtual comas?!

I wasn't even aware of that! I always believed in suggesting rather than showing, and if you've got the shadow or the movement behind the curtain, the audience will do the rest of the work for you. I'm sure it did terrify the children and frightened the adults too, if it didn't they wouldn't have thought I could do the job properly! I mean, what is this series if it doesn't involve that sort of tension? You've got to have fear and danger and overcome that fear and danger. If you read the traditional fairy tales, they are a true struggle through danger; through Pilgrim's Progress you come out the other end a hero. If you live through The Macra Terror and get through the other side you've grown.

There is a strong element in all three of your 'Doctor Who' scripts of people losing their humanity; of having their consciousness or even their essence ripped away from them...

The individual is terribly important to me. I know that any sort of attack on the individual distresses me, and as a youngster used to distress me very much, and I think that if I'm asked for villains I probably unwittingly use them as people who destroy individuals, the inadequate, those who can't help themselves (humanity trapped in a particular situation).

'The Macra Terror' was your last 'Doctor Who'. Were you asked to do any more after that?

There was one I wrote called 'Doctor Who and the Furies' for which I had written the basis of six episodes. I went off to the French West Indies to do a series with a French company and that took four or five months and when I came back I moved on to something else so I never got around to finishing it. As a working writer it used to be important to me to see something ahead and write on so I was reluctant to go back.

Which of your two Doctors did you prefer writing for?

As with Pat McGoohan they were very, very competent actors. What was essential with Doctor Who was to play it with absolute sincerity. The moment that you start codding it or being clever about it and acting as if you're just doing it for children then it's gone. It's got to be entirely sincerely approached. Admittedly it's fantasy and impossible but you must play it for real, and both these two actors took it seriously.

Would you ever consider writing for 'Doctor Who' again?

I'd love to, love to, if it was back to the quality of the sixties and the believability and significance of the sixties, not just a shallow pantomime.

Why do you think it hasn't been working in the last few years?

I didn't think that it sustained the impact. I thought that it got too skittish and imitated itself in a way and they were making important things out of peripheral things, like the length of a scarf of some other trick, and that's not it. You've got to go to the heart of the story and the heart of the story has got to mean something. It's got to be, as I said before, about an internal struggle, it can't just be superficial.

Did you become pigeon-holed as a fantasy/science fiction writer?

No. The next thing I did was The Man In Room Seventeen for Granada about these two men who used to solve everything from this room and never went out.

Didn't you help start off 'The Champions' with William Gaunt?

I worked on it. I only did one, for Dennis Spooner.

Are there any other series in the genre that we haven't covered in this interview?

Oh, masses of things. I haven't really spoken about 1971-76 when I did Elephant Boy, Castaway, Tully, and The Outsiders which we did with the Germans, French and Australians. I never worked on The Avengers and I was offered The Saint by Lew Grade and I stupidly turned it down. If I hadn't turned it down I'd have made a fortune! I just didn't like The Saint. I am being very arrogant now but I thought that the writing was cheap, meaningless and derivative and I didn't believe any of it.

What are you working on at the moment?

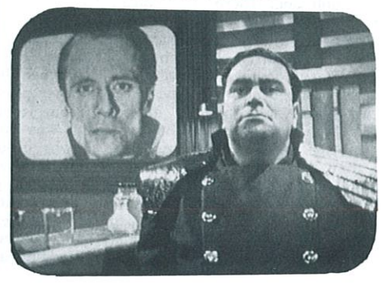
I have a supernatural book out in March published by Constable Books. I've also just finished a draft script for one of the television companies which is the first TV script I've done since I moved down to Devon away from the studios which is a very long time, but I suddenly had the feeling that I'd like to be involved in television again.

Even in today's more competitive climate?

Stories are still stories. Storytelling doesn't change. The technique changes slightly, the fashion changes slightly, but the pattern of the story doesn't change.

IAN STUART BLACK, THANK YOU

INTERVIEWED NOVEMBER 4th, 1990. QUESTIONS BY JEREMY BENTHAM, BRUCE CAMPBELL, GARY LEIGH AND ANDREW PIXLEY.



IAN STUART BLACK CREDITS

TO ATTEMPT A DEFINITIVE LIST OF IAN'S CREDITS THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER WOULD BE A VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TASK, BUT HERE ANDREW PIXLEY HAS COMPILED A GUIDE TO HIS WORK ON SERIES OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE TELEFANTASY FAN:

THE ADVENTURES OF WILLIAM TELL (ITC, 1958/59) Writer:
The General's Daughter (writer)

H.G.WELLS' THE INVISIBLE MAN (Season One: ITP/Official Films, 1958) Writer:
Shadow on the Screen (writer, from original story by Ralph Smart & Philip Levene),
The Mink Coat (writer, from original story by Leonore Coffee),
Jailbreak (writer),
Odds Against Death (writer, from original story by Stanley Mann)

H.G.WELLS' THE INVISIBLE MAN (Season Two: ITP/Official Films, 1959) Writer/scenario editor:
Point of Dstruction (writer),
The Vanishing Evidence (writer),
The Prize (writer),
Flight Into Darkness (writer, from original story by William H. Altman),
The Gun Runners (writer),
The White Rabbit (writer),
Man in Power (writer),
Shadow Bomb (co-writer with Tony O'Grady (alias Brian Clemens),
The Big Plot (writer, from original story by Tony O'Grady - alias Brian Clemens - and Ralph Smart)

DANGER MAN (Season One: ITC, 1960/61) Writer/associate producer on first 12 episodes produced:
Time to Kill <US: Hadncuffed> (co-writer with Brian Clemens,
The Girl In Pink Pyjamas (co-writer with Ralph Smart, from an original story by Brian Clemens),
The Journey Ends Halfway (writer),
Sabotage (co-writer with Michael Pertwee),
Deadline (original story, written by Jo Eisinger)

ONE STEP BEYOND <US: ALCOA PRESENTS...> (Season Three: Associated Redifusion/Collier Young, 1961/62) Writer:
The Tiger (writer)

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE (ABC/ATV, 1961/62) Writer:
The Prisoner (writer),
The English Dragon (writer),
Boy Jack (co-writer with Cedric Wells),
The Garrison (writer),
The Slaves of Spain (writer),
King of America (writer),
Beggars of the Sea (writer),
The Fountain of Youth (writer)

MAN OF THE WORLD (Season One: ITC, 1962) Writer/Script Editor:
Shadow of the Wall (writer)

MAN OF THE WORLD (Season Two: ITC, 1963) Writer/Script Editor:
The Bandit (co-writer with John Pudney)

THE SENTIMENTAL AGENT (ITC, 1963) Writer/Script Supervisor:
A Box Of Tricks (writer)

THE MAN IN ROOM 17 (Season One, Granada, 1965) Writer/Script Editor:
Up Against A Brick Wall (writer)

THE MAN IN ROOM 17 (Season Two, Granada, 1966) Writer:
First Steal Six Eggs (writer)

DOCTOR WHO (Season Three, BBC, 1965/66) Writer:
The Savages (4 episodes, writer),
The War Machines (4 episodes, writer)

DOCTOR WHO (Season Four, BBC, 1966/67) Writer:
The Macra Terror (4 episodes, writer)

THE CHAMPIONS (ITC/Filmakers, 1968/69) Writer:
Desert Journey (writer)

TULLY <pilot in ARMCHAIR CINEMA> (Euston Films/ABC, 1975) Writer

STAR MAIDENS (World-Wide Television/Portman Productions et al, 1976) Writer:
The Trial (writer),
Test For Love (writer),
The Perfect Couple (writer),
What Have They Done To The Rain? (writer),
Creatures of the Mind (writer).

GUIDE TO PHOTOGRAPHS

PAGE 17: (Top) Ian Stuart Black at ExoSpace, and (bottom) 'Star Maidens'; Liz (Lisa Harrow) is introduced to Mendusan society by Octavia (Christine Kruger) in 'Test For Love'.

PAGE 18: (Top) Brady tries to explain to his niece (Deborah Watling) how he became invisible in the 'Secret Experiment' episode of "H.G.Wells' The Invisible Man" and (below) Patrick McGoohan in his 'Danger Man' guise.

PAGE 19: William Hartnell in an arresting situation in the 1966 'Doctor Who' tale 'The Savages' (c) Christopher Barry.

PAGE 20: (Top) A publicity shot from the following story, 'The War Machines' (c) Topham and (below) a selection of off-screen stills from 'The Macra Terror' (c) John Davies.

Horns of a Dilemma: TIME AND THE RANI

I GET QUITE PERPLEXED by the attitude by many that 'Time and the Rani' is somehow substandard 'Doctor Who'. It most definitely is not gothic. It is not plodding, pseudo-military buffoonery. It is also not about neanderthals rolling about in mud.

What **Time and the Rani** is is 89 minutes of solid entertainment that challenges the viewer on several levels, contains morals and allusions, displays a fantastic race of monsters, uses special effects intelligently and effectively, and introduces a new style of music that is contemporary and not a recycling of countless old soundtracks.

The plot is straightforward, but still complex enough for those of intellect. Several adventures have involved plans to capture the Doctor, but they have been either simple revenge stories or featured the Doctor yet again defying fantastic odds and landing in the proper place at the most proficient time. When you realise that an opponent has the capability to pinpoint and draw the Doctor through space and time, then you also admit that this is an opponent to equal or even supercede the Doctor's abilities. I would rather watch the Doctor face an enemy he may not be capable of absolutely defeating than have him battle wits with a lump of perspex that can be restricted by placing a hat on its eyepiece. The villain is also female, perhaps too rare a case in the Whoniverse, and the Rani easily betters the likes of the Cessair of Diplos or Adrasta.

The plot does not consider its audience infantile as in the Hartnell and Troughton days; rather, it assumes people have the ambition to listen carefully and intelligently. Many have complained about the fantastic nature of the Bakers' dialogue, perhaps conveniently forgetting that they base all their stories on science **fact**. Science is the spark, and so scientific and erudite language is to be expected. Listen to any given episode of **STTNG** and you will find a similar style of speech. It may be unfortunate that the TARDIS is not presently home to a science teacher, but then the last time it was the so-called navigator didn't know at which angle to strike a giant match! Things have improved ten-fold since then.

The companion we do have is by no means complex like Ace or K9, but is similar to past companions like Victoria and Zoe. There is no difference between the three of them. Mel proved to be at her best in this story, trying to convince the skeptical Ikona of her true identity and, similarly, trying to find the true identity of the imposter calling himself the Doctor. Mistaken identity is taken a step further with a variation on the doppelganger concept. This time, the idea is more interesting, because we know and can clearly see that the woman the Doctor thinks is Mel is not the real thing. Instead of using the usual cliché of the twin, the Bakers have gone a step further, and much to their credit. It is an effective way to juxtapose the characters of Mel and the Rani, simultaneously giving the viewer a chance to judge each character through the contrast. Wonderful.

The story most importantly gave us the chance to compare Doctors number six and seven, as this was of course Sylvester McCoy's first foray into the rôle. History repeats itself, as it often does in the TARDIS, with the fun and funny costume change McCoy performs before settling on his familiar guise. It is doubly ironic that it is done in front of someone who has also changed costume, but for a more malevolent purpose. As in **Robot**, the costume change gave us the opportunity to say "Yes, that one" or "No, take that off!". It also established a link with Doctors past, as several old outfits were dusted off. Touché.

One would be remiss if the breathtaking special effects were not mentioned. The bubble traps are a gem, and makes one shudder to remember the corny and 'aughable Ice Warrior distortion effect, or the equally incompetent reverse image Dalek extermination effect of yore. The tinting of the sky was also brilliantly conceived, making Lakertya appear as more than the gravel pit it could have been. Final credit must go to the shots of the tumbling strange matter asteroid and the rocket which skirted past it. Lovely.

The Tetraps are a race I pray return. More than just a man in a rubber suit, they are a tribute to both design and effects. The weird overlapping four-way vision was excellent, as was the unique head design. The Tetraps became the perfect lackeys, with eyes in the back of their heads and the ability to fly about. Creatures that bumble around in slow motion like the Ice Warriors can hardly be taken seriously; the Tetraps, versatile and hideous, are light years more effective. One of the five best monsters of all time.

The real coup de grace of the story, though, is Sylvester McCoy. An impressive debut, requiring changes in mood (anger, curiosity, doubt, sadness) and behaviour (the professor, the clown, the negotiator). Anyone who complains about him tripping over his brolly (and remember, he had only just gained consciousness) had better not watch Patrick Troughton drowning in a sea of dish detergent foam, nor Jon Pertwee scrambling about in a wheelchair. McCoy had me hooked from the word go and rose to the challenge the Bakers and director Andrew Morgan gave him. His mixed metaphors were a delight, bringing back memories of those in **The Sunmakers**.

Music from Keff McCulloch was varied and effective. This type of **Doctor Who** requires loud colour and loud music, but the softer moments were equally inspirational. The droning march-like rhythms during the Brain's countdown, or the bassy, majestic themes used when Ikona and Mel spied on the headquarters were perfect. Another plus in a story of plusses!

In conclusion, it seems to me that the theme of indolence the Bakers used was never more appropriate when considering the audience it was used on. Pip and Jane challenged those watching not to be indolent viewers, and to show that they expected more than just child-like running around. The Bakers knew such things were dead and buried in the sixties. **Time and the Rani** was the stuff of the eighties, requiring a better-educated audience, and one that can appreciate that style does not mean simply dark corners or plodding and bumbling monsters.

Bryan Jenner

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DOCTOR WHO

The first story from which you became a regular viewer:

.....

List, in order of preference, your fifteen all-time favourite stories (since **Doctor Who** is such a long-running series we will be using a proportional scoring system which requires that you vote **only** from the first story of a Doctor of whom you have seen **all** stories of - i.e. if you can recall all stories as far back as **The Sea Devils** then only vote from the first story of Tom Baker's era, **Robot**, onwards):

1st .....
2nd .....
3rd .....
4th .....
5th .....
6th .....
7th .....
8th .....
9th .....
10th .....
11th .....
12th .....
13th .....
14th .....
15th .....

Using the above system, list your seven least favourite stories:

1st .....
2nd .....
3rd .....
4th .....
5th .....
6th .....
7th .....

List your favourite and least favourite choices under each of the following categories:

	Favourite	Least Favourite
Doctor	.....	.....
Companion	.....	.....
Enemy	.....	.....
Writer	.....	.....
Director	.....	.....
Producer	.....	.....
Season	.....	.....

BLAKE's 7

List, in order of preference, your ten all-time favourite stories:

1st .....
2nd .....
3rd .....
4th .....
5th .....
6th .....
7th .....
8th .....
9th .....
10th .....

List your five least favourite stories:

1st .....
2nd .....
3rd .....
4th .....
5th .....

List your favourite and least favourite choices under each of the following categories:

	Favourite	Least Favourite
Regular character 1st	.....	.....
2nd	.....	.....
3rd	.....	.....
Regular male actor	.....	.....
Regular female actor	.....	.....
Guest artist	.....	.....
Alien	.....	.....
Writer	.....	.....
Director	.....	.....
Season	.....	.....

The Original STAR TREK

List, in order of preference, your twelve all-time favourite stories:

1st .....
2nd .....
3rd .....
4th .....
5th .....
6th .....
7th .....
8th .....
9th .....
10th .....
11th .....
12th .....

List your six least favourite stories:

1st .....
2nd .....
3rd .....
4th .....
5th .....
6th .....

List your favourite and least favourite choices under each of the following categories:

	Favourite	Least Favourite
Regular character 1st	.....	.....
2nd	.....	.....
3rd	.....	.....
Regular actor	.....	.....
Guest artist (male)	.....	.....
Guest artist (female)	.....	.....
Culture Monster/ villain	.....	.....
Episode title	.....	.....
Writer	.....	.....
Season	.....	.....

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